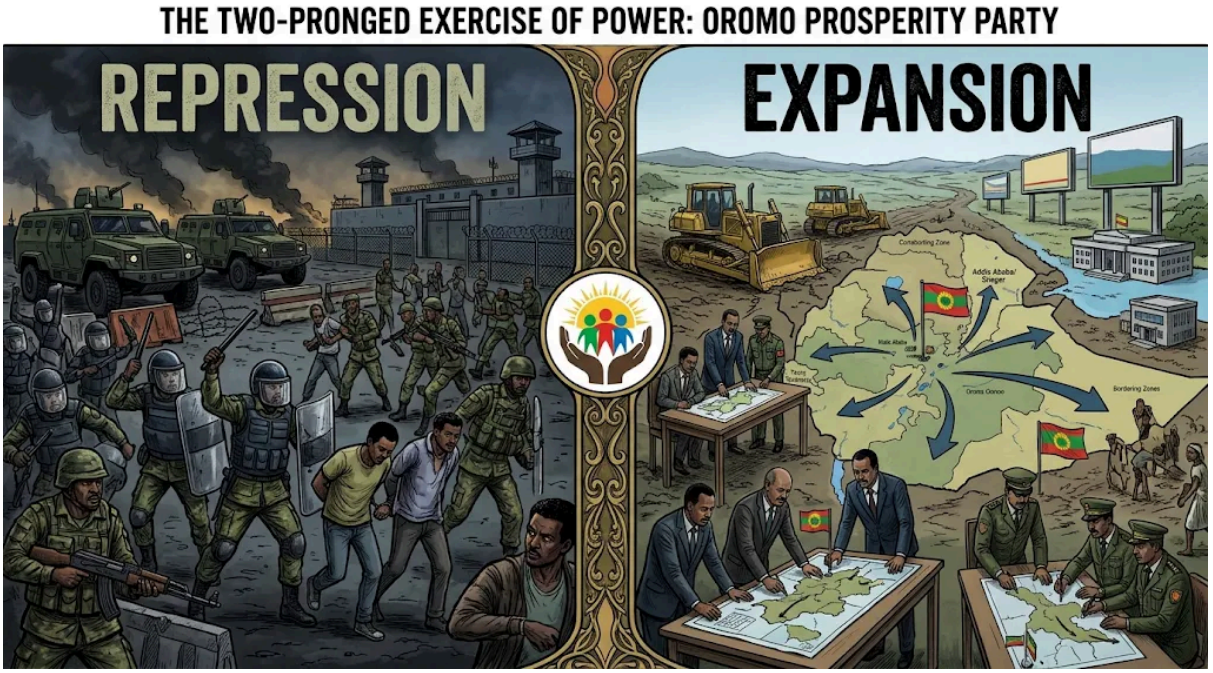
Part I: The Dual-State Architecture



Majoritarian Ethnic Domination and Expansion: The two-pronged ways of exercising power by the Oromo Prosperity Party

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1. Introduction: Scope of the Two-Part Study and Analytical Framework

This academic manuscript constitutes **Part I of a two-part scholarly investigation** into the structural transformation of the contemporary Ethiopian state under Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed and the Oromo-led Prosperity Party (PP). To establish analytical clarity across a vast and interlocking political crisis, the broader study is divided into two complementary volumes:

- **Part I (The Present Study):** Focuses primarily on the internal organization, institutional capture, and formal and informal echelons of power that straddle a single power saddle on both sides of the Ethiopian federal order—operating simultaneously as the powerholder of the federal national government (Ethiopia) and the regional state apparatus (Oromia). It systematically maps how this bifurcated power center is organized across coercive security forces, party-elite hierarchies, military and diplomatic commands, religious-ideological institutions, digital propaganda networks, and state-captured economic conglomerates.
- **Part II (Forthcoming Companion Study):** Focuses primarily on the externalized, ethnofascistic expansion of the dual state—examining the territorial, demographic, and administrative expansion of Oromia and the systematic exercise of political, military, and cultural domination across Ethiopia and the wider Horn of Africa.

1.1 The Constitutional Fiction of Ethnic Federalism and Systemic Identity Crises

Understanding how a single ethno-regional elite came to straddle both the federal and regional saddles of power requires returning to the structural foundations of the post-1991 Ethiopian state. Under the 1995 Constitution, Ethiopia embarked on a radical socio-political experiment: dividing a deeply interwoven, multi-ethnic population of over 100 million people into arbitrary, constitutionally defined ethno-linguistic regional states. While the ruling Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) historically justified this system as a mechanism to rectify historical centralization, the foundational premise of ethnic federalism relies on a critical fiction—that distinct, homogenous ethnic groups occupy neatly delineated geographic territories (Asnake, 2013, p. 112). In reality, Ethiopia's demographic landscape is characterized by centuries of internal migration, intermarriage, urbanization, and fluid identity formation. Consequently, the drawing of ethno-regional borders was an inherently artificial and highly politicized exercise.

The rigid imposition of ethnic identity and ethnic borders upon a mixed population has generated four interrelated systemic crises:

- **Ethnic Profiling:** In post- 1991 Ethiopia, local administrative identification (such as traditional Kebele ID cards) and national databases have been designed to track ethnic identity. The rigid imposition of ethnic identities and ethnic borders upon a mixed population has generated systemic crises in the country (Melesse, 2021, p. 2). Millions of Ethiopians of mixed ethnic heritage have been forced to adopt their paternal ethnicity for official identification (Abbink, 2006, p. 153). Mandatory ethnic labeling, facilitated by documents specifically designed to track ethnic origin (CMI, 2004, p. 5), has enabled ethnic profiling and created systemic vulnerabilities for targeted populations such as the Amhara. Widespread ethnically motivated massacres, kidnappings, and displacement of Amharas have been heavily documented across every region of the country. The official classification system has enabled the easy identification of ethnic Amharas, leading government forces and proxy groups to subject them to targeted mass kidnappings, massacres, and displacement (Yirga, 2026, p. 7).
- **Forced Assimilation:** Academic studies detail the "mnemonic re-engineering" and demographic shifts in Wolkait, Raya, Dera, and Metekel following the 1991 implementation of ethnic federalism. Amharas living in these annexed areas have been coerced into abandoning their language and culture, facing forced assimilation into Tigrayan, Oromo and other identities (Yirga, 2026, p. 9). This was implemented, among others, by banning the Amharic language in courts and schools, forcing the population to learn and use a language and culture other than their own. Forced integration has become the rule rather than the exception for targeted populations and minorities living among dominant ethnic populations (Tesfaye, 2008, p. 210).
- **Subordination of Ethiopian Identity:** The thesis that a national "Ethiopian identity" has been superseded by an "ethnic identity" is a primary academic critique of the ethno-territorial system established post-1991, which inherently marginalized minorities living outside their designated ethnic zones. Ethiopians who challenge or resist the imposition of ethnic politics face persecution or are driven into exile (John, 2021, p. 11). Ultimately, Ethiopian identity has been systematically subordinated to ethnic allegiances (Melesse, 2021, p. 4).
- **Second-Class Citizenship:** Individuals residing in regional states constitutionally designated for a single ethnic group to which they do not belong are legally and practically reduced to second-class citizens. They are systematically excluded from local political representation, civil service employment, and secure land tenure. Areas and towns characterized by mixed populations —such as the metropolitan expanse of Addis Ababa—have

> become structural flashpoints. Because the constitution offers no mechanism for geographic integration, using violence and demographic engineering to claim sovereignty on an area populated by mixed ethnic groups has been the modus operandi of the Oromo -PP (Fisher & Gebrewold, 2022, p. 45).

1.2 Cascading Humanitarian, Legal, and Macroeconomic Consequences

The permanentization of conflict through artificially and arbitrarily imposed ethnic identity and ethnic federalism has generated catastrophic cascading effects, fracturing the social fabric and triggering massive internal displacement affecting between 3 and 5 million internally displaced persons (IDPs). The humanitarian safety net collapsed by late 2026 due to donor fatigue, leaving displaced populations severely malnourished as early as 2020 (Bellizzi et al., 2020, p. 14). Politically, the normalization of extrajudicial killings by proxy entities has signaled the total erosion of the rule of law. Furthermore, the systematic destruction of agricultural capital—a calculated tactic of "eco-violence"—ensures surviving minority populations have no economic foundation to return to, forcing them into absolute aid dependency and politically neutralizing them through voter disenfranchisement (Homer-Dixon, 1999, p. 78; IDMC, 2023, p. 12). The aggregate economic impact of this internal displacement costs the national economy between $1.1 billion and $2 billion annually (Makango et al., 2023, p. 8).

1.3 Theoretical Synthesis: The Dual-State Paradigm, Ethnocracy, and the Parasitoid State Model

This manuscript synthesizes these empirical realities through the dual-state paradigm, a theoretical model positing that the current administration under Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed operates two parallel nations—Oromia and the rest of Ethiopia —under a single federal governmental apparatus (Kebede, 2023, p. 42). Conceptually, this framework builds upon Ernst Fraenkel's (1941, p. xiii) foundational theory of the Dual State, which distinguishes between a formal "normative state" (preserving legal facades, ministries, and diplomatic protocols) and a parallel "prerogative state" (exercising unchecked, extrajudicial violence and arbitrary political will), combined with Oren Yiftachel's (2006, p. 11) model of ethnocracy, wherein a dominant ethnic group appropriates the state apparatus to institutionalize its demographic, territorial, and political supremacy.

In the Ethiopian context, the collision of constitutional fictions with majoritarian state capture has enabled the Oromo-led Prosperity Party (PP) to reorient the federal state's economic, military, intelligence, and diplomatic resources to establish an ethnocratic Oromo hegemony—an authoritarian structure dominated by Oromo elites. The external shell of the historical Ethiopian state is preserved for international

legitimacy and sovereign borrowing power, while its internal mechanisms are repurposed to incubate and ensure the supremacy of a dominant Oromo state.

To capture the dynamic mechanics of this internal takeover, contemporary political analysts also conceptualize Ethiopia's structural transformation through the **Parasitoid State Model**. Drawing a direct biological parallel between the mechanism of the Phorid fly ("zombie fly") and Ethiopia's post-2018 political crisis, this model illustrates how critics argue the multi-ethnic, historical fabric of Ethiopia is being hollowed out and replaced from within by an expansionist ethnonationalist state (Abbink, 2022, p. 89):

1. **The Injection:** In nature, the fly lays eggs inside a host (an ant or bee), using the host's body to feed its offspring.
    - *The Political Parallel (The 2018 Transition):* Abiy Ahmed Ali came to power on promises of national unity (*Medemer*). Critics argue this served as a Trojan horse, embedding ultra-radical ethnonationalist political elites at the center of the federal state.
2. **The Consumption:** The larva eats the host from within, leaving the exterior intact while altering its behavior.
    - *The Political Parallel (Institutional Capture):* Key federal institutions—including the military, judiciary, banking sector, and federal ministries—are systematically occupied by Oromo elites. The outer shell of "Ethiopia" remains intact for external recognition, while its internal mechanisms serve an emerging ethnonationalist hegemony with dominant and expansionist objectives.
3. **The Migration to the Head:** The larva moves to the brain of the host, inducing "zombie-like" disorientation and loss of control.
    - *The Political Parallel (Targeting the Capital and Political Center):* The demographic and political push toward Addis Ababa—the historic, cultural, and administrative "head" of the country—alters the multi-ethnic identity of the population through forced displacement via so-called corridor development, securing control over the core institutions of the country by dominating the center.
4. **Decapitation and Emergence:** The host's head falls off, and the fully matured fly emerges, leaving the host dead.
    - *The Political Parallel (Systemic Fragmentation):* Critics fear a final stage in which historical Ethiopia collapses into fragmentation, allowing a dominant, ethnocratic Oromo state to fully materialize from the ruins.

1.4 Aims and Structure of Part I

Guided by this theoretical red thread, Part I pursues four primary analytical objectives:

1. **Examine the Dual-State Governance Mechanism**, tracing how a single Oromo-PP leadership simultaneously straddles the federal government of Ethiopia and the regional state of Oromia.
2. **Deconstruct Formal versus Informal Organizational Power**, mapping the interplay between formal state institutions (ministries, ENDF, regular police, embassies) and clandestine or proxy networks (*Koree Nageenyaa*, *Repi Lola*, *Gaachana Sirnaa*, pseudo-Shene, pseudo-Fano, and the 120 Group).
3. **Analyze the Weaponization of State Resources**, examining the capture of military command, high-tech surveillance, diplomatic representation, religious institutions, digital propaganda, and macroeconomic/corporate capital.
4. **Establish the Institutional Foundation for Part II**, demonstrating how the domestic consolidation of coercive, political, and financial power creates the launchpad for Oromo ethnonationalist expansionism and regional domination explored in Part II.

2. Oromo-Dominated Prosperity Party and the Consolidation of Ethnocratic Hegemony

The ascent of Abiy Ahmed in 2018 marked a decisive paradigm shift: Oromo political elites within the Oromia regional state were no longer fighting the federal state; they became the federal state. Prior to 2018, conflicts involving Oromia were predominantly defensive or anti-state, often driven by weak opponents of the TPLF regime engaged in low-scale armed struggles and social-media campaigns. Following the dissolution of the EPRDF, the Oromo wing of the Prosperity Party captured the federal apparatus (Tronvoll, 2022, p. 118).

This institutional capture was immediately followed by a massive, asymmetrical injection of federal resources into the Oromia region. The government of Abiy Ahmed soon created proxy groups to strengthen its power by assassinating those it deemed actual or potential threats to its political rule, and to execute its planned expansion and domination through mass evictions and atrocities. Concurrently, the Oromo-dominated PP government tacitly allowed proxies to execute orchestrated bank raids to finance regional power bases. Between January 2019 and July 2023, hundreds of millions of Birr were expropriated via orchestrated "bank robberies." The most intense period occurred over a single weekend (January 12–13, 2019), when government proxy groups simultaneously raided 17 bank branches in the Kellem

Wollega and West Wollega zones (Borkena, 2019, p. 2). Across this roughly four-and-a-half-year period, over 40 rural banks and financial centers were systematically emptied without any subsequent genuine federal recovery or arrests, causing the government to functionally act as a financier for Oromia-based armed elements.

Simultaneously, the nature of conflicts along Oromia's borders rapidly transformed into state-sponsored ethnonationalist expansionism. The Oromo-dominated PP accelerated the recruitment, training, and arming of the Oromia Regional Special Forces. Rather than standard three-month police instruction, recruits received six-month military-grade training across regional military camps (Ethiopian Institute of Peace, 2021, pp. 11–12). The Oromia Regional State circumvented constitutional boundaries to construct a highly militarized regional army numbering between 150,000 and 200,000 personnel (EHRC, 2022, p. 14). Oromia Regional President Shimelis Abdisa explicitly framed this militarization through the "raw meat" doctrine ("ጥሬ ስጋ እያበላን ያሰለጠነው ኃይል አለን"), symbolizing an aggressive martial vanguard loyal solely to the regional elite—even as Prime Minister Abiy actively hindered the training of non-Oromo forces, notably accusing Amhara officials of illicitly training local police as early as 2019 (Borkena, 2019, p. 4).

3. Taxonomy of Armed Forces in Oromia: Formal, Clandestine, and Proxy Structures

To execute its political and territorial objectives while maintaining plausible deniability during mass atrocities, the dual-state regime operates through an intricate web of formal regional security forces, clandestine state hit squads, and informal proxy militias.

3.1 Formal and Clandestine Regional State Forces

A. The Oromia Special Police Force (*Liyu Hail*) and the *Gada Commando*

The Oromia Special Police Force (Amharic: *Liyu Hail*) was established in 2008 with an initial core of only 120 members (European Institute of Peace [EIP], 2021, p. 12). Following the 2018 political transition, under Oromia Regional President Shimelis Abdisa, the force underwent massive expansion. Recruits underwent rigorous six-month training programs—double the standard three-month training for regular police and equivalent to Ethiopian National Defense Force (ENDF) infantry training (EIP, 2021, p. 12). By 2021, estimates for the Oromia Special Force had surged to nearly 100,000–150,000 personnel, making it one of the largest and most militarized regional forces in the country (EIP, 2021, p. 13).

In April 2023, Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed's federal government announced a controversial and sweeping policy to formally disband all regional special forces across Ethiopia's ethnic-based federal states (Garowe Online, 2023, p. 1). The central government argued that heavily armed regional paramilitaries posed a threat to national unity, fueled inter-regional border conflicts, and undermined the federal state's monopoly of violence. Under this directive, regional special forces were ordered to be dissolved and integrated into one of three entities:

1. The Ethiopian National Defense Force (ENDF);
2. The Federal Police; or
3. Regular Regional Police forces (Garowe Online, 2023, p. 1).

The Oromia regional government nominally complied with the federal directive; however, rather than relinquishing its elite paramilitary capabilities to the federal army, Oromia integrated the bulk of its special forces into its regional police apparatus, effectively rebranding them (Horn Observer, n.d., p. 1). Following the 2023 disbandment directive, the Oromia region reorganized its most elite and highly trained former special forces personnel into a newly minted unit operating under the regional police framework, dubbed the Gada Commando (Addis Standard, 2026, p. 1).

Historical Roots of the Gada Commando:- Despite modern political attempts to sanitize the term, the historical Gada system was inherently militaristic, functioning as a highly aggressive offensive military machine that drove the massive 16th- and 17th-century Oromo expansions (Hassen, 1990, p. 18). The Gada system rigidly organized society into age-sets and generation grades, centered on the Luba grade (the ruling class) and the Raabaa-Doorii (the warrior class). These classes were structurally mandated to undertake military campaigns, conduct devastating raids, and conquer new territories to prove their martial valor during their eight-year tenure in power (Hassen, 1990, p. 63; OSF Preprints, 2026, p. 3). During the 16th century, Gada warriors utilized highly mobile guerrilla tactics (historically known as *Gaaduu*) to overrun rival kingdoms and indigenous communities, resulting in immense violence, the destruction of indigenous settlements, and the mass displacement of rival ethnic groups (Zewde, 2001, p. 17). Populations that were not killed or displaced were subjected to Gada institutions of assimilation—namely Moggaasa (forced or coerced collective assimilation) and Gudifacha (adoption)—through which subjugated ethnic groups were structurally stripped of their original identities, forced to adopt Oromo language and culture, and absorbed into Oromo clans to swell the ranks of the Gada military machine (Gnamo, 2014, p. 34). While contemporary Oromo historians emphasize the egalitarian aspects of these institutions, historical

chronicles from non-Oromo victims heavily document massacres, cultural erasure, and severe atrocities systematically executed through the Gada military structure (Bahrey, 1593/1954, p. 121). Critics argue that this historical template has been reactivated under the new *Raabaa-Doorii* leader, Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed, acting as the ultimate chief of the Gada Commando.

Operational Structure and Cross-Border Incursions: The Gada Commando was formed through specialized advanced training to serve as a highly mobile, counter-insurgency rapid-response force. While nominally designated as a "police" unit to comply with federal mandates against "special forces," the Gada Commandos function identically to the former paramilitaries, equipped as a light motorized infantry unit conducting heavy combat operations against the OLA and in contested zones such as East Wollega (EIP, 2021, p. 12; Addis Standard, 2026, p. 1). Its chain of command exemplifies the dual-state saddle: Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed sits at the apex as Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces, exercising ultimate oversight over national security architecture; directly beneath him, Oromia Regional President Shimelis Abdisa heads the regional security council, determining strategic deployment and political directives (EIP, 2021, p. 12); and immediate tactical command was exercised by Commissioner General Ararsa Merdasa, overseeing day-to-day deployments across the region's 20 zones (MultiFactCheck, n.d., p. 1; Oromia Police Commission, n.d., p. 1).

Beyond internal policing, the Gada Commando (and its predecessor, the Oromia Special Forces) has expanded its jurisdiction to conduct cross-border incursions into the Amhara, Sidama, Somali, Central Ethiopia (Gurage), and Benishangul-Gumuz regions. Mirroring 16th-century patterns, these incursions have been characterized by extreme violence aimed at altering demographic and territorial realities and securing resource-rich corridors.

Table 1: Chronology of Major Atrocities and Cross-Border Incursions Attributed to the Gada Commando (2023–November 2026)

Dates	Names of Places	Atrocities
Aug–Dec 2023	Sibu Sire (Oromia); Gurage Zone border (Central Ethiopia)	Extrajudicial executions, mass arbitrary arrests, and border intimidation targeting civilians protesting forced administrative demarcations and annexations.
Feb–Oct 2024	Dera Woreda (Amhara Region); West Arsi–Sidama Region border	Cross-border incursions into Amhara and Sidama territories. Tactics included summary executions, destruction of civil property, and systemic kidnapping for ransom to fund operations.

Dates	Names of Places	Atrocities
Jan–Aug 2025	Guji Zone (Oromia); Benishangul-Gumuz (Kamashi/Metekel borders)	Trans-regional attacks into Benishangul-Gumuz to expand operational depth. Targeted killings of commercial farmers and investors, forced displacement, and conflict-related sexual violence (CRSV).
Sep–Nov 2026	Moyale (Somali Region border); Benishangul-Gumuz; East Wollega	Heavy militarized clashes in Moyale between Oromia and Somali regional forces over territorial flags, killing civilians. In Benishangul, recent incursions left dozens dead amid state security negligence. In Wollega, coordinated ground massacres alongside drone strikes.

B. Oromia Regular Police

While exact totals are not publicly verified by the regional government, academic sampling and institutional analysis indicate that the Oromia Regular Police numbers in the tens of thousands of active personnel, deployed primarily for standard crime prevention, traffic regulation, and criminal investigations (Molla Ewenetu, 2025, p. 1). Despite its formal mandate to enforce law and order, it has seldom investigated the numerous atrocities committed in the region or brought a single perpetrator to justice, instead participating directly in extrajudicial abuses and extortion.

Table 2: Reported Atrocities Perpetrated by the Oromia Regular Police (2021–2026)

Date	Place	Type of Atrocities
May 11, 2021	Dembi Dollo (Wollega)	Public extrajudicial executions and severe torture (e.g., executing a civilian named Amanuel in front of his family after parading him bloodied).
2023	Addis–Djibouti Highway (A1 Road)	Arbitrary detentions, denial of due process, and targeted extortion of commercial truck drivers navigating regional checkpoints.
Mar 14, 2024	Qilxaa village	Targeted arson of grass-thatched civilian homes, looting of property, and forced displacement without prior warning.
Nov 13–29, 2024	Oromia Regional Detention Centers	Widespread arbitrary detentions, forced conscription, and systemic monetary extortion targeting civilians for release.
Mar 2025	East Borana	Extrajudicial killings and severe torture under the guise of counter-insurgency operations.
Early–Mid 2026	Oromia-wide	Massive wave of arbitrary detentions, state-sponsored demographic manipulation, and violent extortion. Police frequently demanded exorbitant

Date	Place	Type of Atrocities
		ransoms from families to release arbitrarily detained civilians.

C. The Regional Militia (*Gaachana Sirnaa* / Kebele Militia)

While the April 2023 federal mandate directed special police into formal state organs (ENDF or regular police), a substantial fraction of former special police personnel was absorbed into localized Kebele militias. This informal transfer equipped the communal militia system with advanced tactical experience and heavier weaponry originally intended for regional paramilitaries, significantly elevating its combat capacity (UK Home Office, 2026, p. 7). International conflict and policy reports note that while a unified strength figure is technically unknown, the collective Kebele militia system comprises tens of thousands of armed militiamen operating under local administrative command across the region (Landinfo, 2023, p. 28; UK Home Office, 2026, p. 7). Marketed as community defense, *Gaachana Sirnaa* functions as a partisan paramilitary wing mobilized to enforce PP political mandates, suppress opposition at the kebele (ward) level, and commit atrocities (EHRCO, 2022, p. 9).

Table 3: Recorded Atrocities Perpetrated by the Oromia Kebele Militia / *Gaachana Sirnaa* (2022–2026)

Date	Place	Type of Atrocities	Number of Victims
2022–2026	Wollega Zones	Arson of civilian homes, forced displacement, and structural impersonation of OLA insurgents to inflict terror; threatened confiscation of land belonging to fleeing civilians.	Thousands displaced; dozens killed
Nov–Dec 2022	Kiremu & Gutin (Western Oromia)	Indiscriminate mass killings and village burnings in retaliatory cycles alongside Fano militia clashes.	20+ killed in Kiremu; 69 killed in Gutin
2023–2026	Regional highways and rural checkpoints	Extortion of commercial drivers, arbitrary checkpoints, and systematic looting. Unpaid local militias increasingly rely on confiscated civilian goods, truck cargos, and extortion money for survival. The practice intensified significantly throughout 2025 and 2026.	Widespread (commercial drivers and locals)
Jan–Mar 2026	Rural Oromia	Conflict-related sexual violence, including gang rape and sexual slavery, weaponized against civilian	Hundreds of documented cases

Date	Place	Type of Atrocities	Number of Victims
		populations suspected of harboring insurgents.	
Oct–Nov 2026	Shirka Woreda (Arsi Zone)	Post-attack arbitrary arrests, systemic intimidation, and looting targeting Orthodox Christian communities, causing localized displacement.	73 formally detained; unknown total displaced

D. *Repi Lola* (Elite Tactical Strike Units)

Derived from the Oromo language meaning "commando" or "guerrilla fighter" (evoking 16th-century guerrilla raiders), *Repi Lola* consists of highly specialized, elite tactical strike units operating within the Oromia security apparatus. Deployed for high-value targets, rapid interventions in contested border zones, and the suppression of localized rebellions, Repi Lola serves as a tactical strike unit and covert hit squad operating outside standard police frameworks (Amnesty International, 2020, p. 12; Paravicini, 2024, p. 1).

Table 4: Documented Atrocities Attributed to *Repi Lola* Units (2019–2024)

Date	Place	Type of Atrocities
2019–2020	West Guji & Wollega Zones	"Sweep and clear" rapid interventions. Elite security units systematically burned down civilian homes, committed extrajudicial executions, and utilized mass rape during counter-insurgency operations against local rebels.
Dec 1, 2021	Metti, East Shewa	The Karrayyuu Massacre: A specialized regional strike squad abducted and executed traditional community leaders (*Abbaa Gadaas*) after receiving cellular authorization from Prosperity Party officials.
Apr 9–10, 2024	Meki, East Shewa	High-Value Political Assassination: An elite state hit squad abducted prominent OLF political officer Jaal Batte Urgessa from his hotel, bound his hands, and shot him execution-style in the head and abdomen.

E. *Koree Nageenyaa* (The Shadow Security Committee)

The *Koree Nageenyaa* represents the institutionalization of extrajudicial violence—the quintessential organ of the prerogative state within Ethiopia's dual-state system. Composed of high-ranking Oromo-PP officials and regional police commanders, this shadow committee operates outside all constitutional frameworks, ordering the assassinations of political rivals, critical journalists, and traditional leaders. It was

directly responsible for the December 2021 massacre of 14 Karrayyuu Gadaa traditional leaders in East Shewa (Reuters, 2023, p. 3).

Table 5: Documented Operations and Atrocities Directed by the *Koree Nageenyaa* (2021–2026)

Date	Place	Type of Atrocities
Dec 1, 2021	Metti/Karra, Fantalle (East Shewa)	The Karrayyuu Massacre: The *Koree Nageenyaa* directly authorized the abduction and execution of traditional community leaders (*Abbaa Gadaas*) during a *Waaqa Kadhaa* prayer ceremony. State media initially falsely blamed the OLA, but investigations proved state security forces executed the orders.
2022–2024	Oromia-wide	*Koree Nageenyaa* Assassinations: State-sanctioned hit squads (commandos) executed hundreds of suspected dissidents and OLA sympathizers without trial, utilizing severe torture (e.g., upside-down suspension and electrocution).
2022–2024	Oromia-wide (Regional Detention Centers)	Mass Arbitrary Detentions & Torture: The committee issued sweeping directives for the arrests of civilians without warrants, investigations, or due process. Detainees were subjected to severe torture in hidden facilities, acting on direct orders from committee members.
Apr 9–10, 2024	Meki, East Shewa	High-Value Political Assassination: The *Koree Nageenyaa* is widely believed to have ordered the abduction and execution of prominent Oromo Liberation Front (OLF) political officer Jaal Batte Urgessa, who was shot in the head and abdomen and dumped on a roadside.
Jan–Aug 2025	West Shewa & East Wollega	Targeted Elimination of Local Cadres: The committee escalated its hit-squad operations to target mid-level OLF political cadres and local community organizers suspected of funding insurgents. Operations involved forced disappearances followed by summary executions in rural areas.
Mar–Oct 2026	Sheger City & Regional Urban Centers	Urban Disappearances & "Ghost Prisons": Deployment of *Repi Lola* plainclothes operatives to abduct journalists, civic activists, and political dissidents from their homes in newly incorporated urban zones. Victims were systematically held in unmapped black sites under direct *Koree Nageenyaa* oversight without formal logging.

3.2 Informal and Proxy Forces

Complementing these state organs are three major informal and proxy networks that provide operational deniability and destabilize targeted communities:

- **The Proxy "Shene":** While the federal government officially designates the Oromo Liberation Army (OLA) as a terrorist organization, it has organized pseudo-forces ("Shene") utilizing OLA defectors. Extensive documentation shows tactical collusion between government forces and Shene elements to

displace ethnic Amharas from the Wollega zones and invade Amhara borderlands, with state forces withdrawing to permit massacres before returning to claim the territory (Human Rights Watch, 2022, p. 31).

- **Government-Financed Proxy "Fano":** To counter genuine Amhara popular resistance, federal intelligence and the Oromo-PP have organized and financed pseudo-Fano groups tasked with committing false-flag atrocities against civilians to delegitimize the authentic Amhara resistance (Addis Standard, 2023, p. 5).
- **The 120 Group:** An informal criminal network operating within Oromia—predominantly in West Shewa (Ambo), Shashemene, and Assela. Protected by local law enforcement, the 120 Group conducts kidnappings, enforced disappearances, extortion via formal banking channels, illicit land grabs, and severe physical abuses, rendering urban centers practically "under siege" (Addis Standard, 2026, p. 12).

3.3 Forced Conscription and the Role of the Oromia Militia and Regular Police

Sustaining the dual state's multi-front military campaigns has required a deeply coercive system of military recruitment across Oromia. Investigations by domestic monitors, international human rights organizations, and diplomatic sources reveal how regional security apparatuses fulfill aggressive PP recruitment quotas through street-level abductions and detention-based extortion.

The Oromia Militia: Frontline Abductions and Quota Enforcement

Operating at the village and street levels, local Oromia militias function as the frontline enforcers of state conscription policies, rounding up civilians to satisfy numerical targets handed down by PP authorities:

- **Quotas and Compensation:** Reports from the Ethiopian Policy Institute (2024, p. 1) indicate that militias are heavily incentivized by a quota system in which their standing and compensation depend on the sheer volume of individuals captured. This pressure leads them to sweep public spaces, such as bus stations and cafes, indiscriminately.
- **Targeting the Highly Vulnerable (Minors, Mentally Ill, and Disabled):** Evaluated by volume rather than military fitness, militias frequently abduct those least able to resist:
    - *Minors:* The U.S. Department of Labor's *Findings on the Worst Forms of Child Labor* (2024, p. 1) documented at least 14 specific cases of children arbitrarily detained by armed forces for military training in Oromia, including instances where the youngest conscript captured was just 11 years old.

    - *Mentally Ill and Disabled:* A 2026 Human Rights Watch report, subsequently cited by the UK Home Office's *Country Policy and Information Note: Ethiopia* (2026, p. 7), explicitly documented the detention of mentally ill and physically disabled individuals during these sweeps. Although international human rights protocols require withholding specific names and exact numbers to protect victims from state retaliation, the reports confirm their abduction is a systemic outcome of the blind quota system.
- **Selective Targeting:** Local media and diplomatic reports note that militias disproportionately target the powerless—specifically non-Oromo youths living in Oromia, internal migrants, and daily laborers lacking formal identification—who lack community protection to fend off sweeps.

The Oromia Regular Police: Extortion and Detention Networks

While militias execute street-level abductions, the Oromia Regular Police manage detention centers and operate lucrative extortion rackets:

- **The Extortion Racket:** According to the U.S. Department of Labor (2024, p. 1), families of detained youths are frequently forced to pay "a large sum of money for the release of their children under the threat that the children would be sent to military training facilities."
- **The Cycle of Bribery and Recapture:** As documented by *Addis Standard* (2024, p. 1), regular police operate a revolving-door extortion network. Youths whose families manage to pool resources to bribe police officials are frequently marked and recaptured in subsequent sweeps, trapping families in devastating cycles of debt to repeatedly buy temporary freedom.
- **State Complicity:** In its December 2024 investigation, the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission (EHRC) concluded that the Oromia regional administration and its official security forces are directly responsible for these forcible detentions (Ethiopian Policy Institute, 2024, p. 1). The regular police utilize state authority to shield these abduction-for-ransom schemes, operating with total impunity.

4. The Political Architecture of Ethnocratic Hegemony

Beneath the coercive security apparatus lies a tightly stratified political hierarchy. Following the dissolution of the EPRDF and the creation of the Prosperity Party by Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed, the Oromo-PP consolidated power into a multi-layered coalition drawing from co-opted former opposition figures, legacy OPDO leaders, and hyper-loyal regional/federal actors who frequently strategize in private retreats (Fisher & Gebrewold, 2022, p. 45).

4.1 Category 1: Government-Allied OLF Veterans and ODF Members

To secure historical nationalist legitimacy and neutralize radical factions, the administration integrated exiled leaders of the Oromo Liberation Front (OLF) and the Oromo Democratic Front (ODF) (Tronvoll, 2021, p. 88):

- **Lencho Letta:** Founding member and former Deputy Secretary-General of the OLF who later founded the moderate ODF; returned in 2018 and acts as an informal yet highly trusted advisor to Abiy Ahmed, providing ideological backing among older generations of Oromo nationalists (Østebø, 2020, p. 112).
- **Dr. Dima Nego:** Veteran OLF founder and key ODF leader integrated into the political transition, participating in state-sponsored initiatives including the National Dialogue Commission.
- **Lencho Bati:** Veteran OLF and ODF figure who transitioned into the diplomatic corps, serving as an ambassador (including his tenure in Saudi Arabia and nomination to the United States), exemplifying the placement of former nationalist figures in key international postings.
- **General Kamal Gelchu:** Former Ethiopian military general who defected to Eritrea and led an OLF faction; returned to Ethiopia and integrated into the regime's broader coalition, bringing military credentials and nationalist legitimacy.
- **Abebe Geresu:** Prominent former OLF military commander whose integration signifies the co-optation of traditional armed resistance figures into the new order.
- **Brigadier General Hailu Gonfa:** Prominent former OLF general serving as the PP regime's Ethiopian representative in African Union (AU) security, aligning regional security architectures with regime interests.

4.2 Category 2: Former OPDO Leaders, Oromia Presidents, and Confidants

The operational infrastructure of the Oromo-PP rests on legacy networks of the Oromo People's Democratic Organization (OPDO), whose veteran leaders frequently accompany the Prime Minister to private retreats and exclusive resorts to deliberate on secretive state strategy:

- **Hassan Ali Ibrahim:** First President of Oromia (1992–1995), who returned to Ethiopia in December 2025 after 27 years of exile in the United States. Within the PP regime, he functions as a senior ideologue and historical bridge, quietly mediating with legacy Oromo factions (Smith, 2026, p. 114).
- **Kuma Demeksa:** Second President of Oromia (1995–2001) and later Mayor of Addis Ababa, Minister of Defense, and Ambassador to Germany; serves as

an informal political advisor and confidant managing internal party cohesion (Girma, 2024, p. 32).

- **Juneidi Saddo:** President of Oromia (2001–2005) and former federal minister who returned from exile in 2018; cited as a trusted confidant whose networks are consulted to maintain regional stability (International Crisis Group, 2023, p. 14).
- **Abadula Gemeda:** President of Oromia (2005–2010), former Speaker of the House of Peoples' Representatives, military general, and National Security Advisor; remains a prominent power broker and confidant, highlighted by a biographical book on his legacy launched in June 2026 (Africa Confidential, 2024, p. 3).
- **Alemayehu Atomsa:** President of Oromia (2010–2014), who passed away on March 6, 2014, due to illness—the only deceased former regional head since Oromia's establishment (Wikipedia, 2026, p. 1).
- **Muktar Kadir (Kedir):** President of Oromia (2014–2016); serves as a strategic advisor on party alignment and active diplomat, including as Ethiopia's Ambassador to Saudi Arabia (Mengistu, 2025, p. 89).
- **Lemma Megersa:** President of Oromia during the critical 2016–2019 transition and subsequently Minister of Defense, who stepped away from active ministerial positions following profound political disagreements.
- **Shimelis Abdisa:** Succeeded Lemma Megersa in April 2019 as incumbent President of the Oromia Region, securing a second term in September 2026 (The Reporter Ethiopia, 2026, p. 1).
- **Dr. Mulatu Teshome and Main OPDO Central Committee Members:** Former President of Ethiopia (2013–2018) and veteran OPDO Central Committee member, remaining a respected elder statesman undertaking strategic diplomatic missions alongside other OPDO Central Committee advisors guiding high-level policy formulation.

4.3 Category 3: Inner-Circle Officials, Advisors, and Tech-Intelligence Loyalists

Following the purge of former allies such as Lemma Megersa, Abiy consolidated power by elevating hyper-loyal OPDO/ODP officials and fusing legacy party structures with personal loyalists from his former domain at the Information Network Security Administration (INSA). Conversely, anyone within the original OPDO/ODP inner circle who openly questioned the transition into the monolithic Prosperity Party or disputed military approaches in Oromia has been systematically stripped of power and suspended from the Central Committee:

- **Shimelis Abdisa** (Former OPDO CC & ODP Executive Member; President of Oromia Regional State): Serves as the regime's geographic anchor in Oromia,

coordinating the regional political apparatus and commanding regional security forces to sustain Abiy's federal dominance (Human Rights Watch, 2023, p. 41).

- **Adanech Abebe** (Former Head of ODP Secretariat; Mayor of Addis Ababa): Functions as the urban enforcer, securing federal control over the capital, directing city-wide demographic and infrastructure overhauls, and shielding Abiy from urban dissent (Bekele, 2025, p. 77).
- **Dr. Alemu Sime** (Former OPDO CC & ODP Executive Member; Minister of Transport and Logistics): Acts as party ideologue and trusted logistical asset managing regional infrastructure shifts and internal party compliance (Tadesse, 2024, p. 21).
- **Berhanu Tsegaye** (Former ODP Executive Member & Attorney General; Ambassador and Senior Diplomatic Asset): Serves as a legal architect and diplomatic shield positioned in strategic international postings to navigate global pressure (Africa Confidential, 2025, p. 9).
- **Kenea Yadeta** (Veteran Oromia Security Official & OPDO Legacy Member; National Security Advisor to the PM): Former head of the Oromia Peace and Security Bureau who now commands the Prime Minister's security strategy and manages ongoing conflicts in Oromia (International Crisis Group, 2024, p. 18).
- **Addisu Arega** (Former ODP Political Department Bureau Head; Head of the Prosperity Party Democratic Building Center): Party apparatus architect overseeing internal organizational discipline, public relations, and narrative alignment across regional branches (Girma, 2024, p. 55).
- **Fekadu Tessema** (Former OPDO CC & ODP Executive Member; Head of the Oromia Prosperity Party Office): Regional gatekeeper enforcing day-to-day party discipline and executing structural purges of dissident Oromo elements from the central committee (Mengistu, 2025, p. 102).

4.4 "Blood Is Thicker than Water": The Semblance of Opposition

A defining nuance of Ethiopia's ethnocratic landscape is the relationship between the ruling Oromo-PP and traditional Oromo opposition parties, namely the Oromo Federalist Congress (OFC) and the Oromo Liberation Front (OLF). Critics allege that these entities ultimately converge with Oromo-PP objectives whenever overarching ethnic interests are at stake. Jawar Mohammed, once a militant OFC activist initially imprisoned by the Abiy administration, shifted after his release toward warning against state collapse—a pivot critics interpret as a pragmatic alliance with the Oromo-PP to preserve Oromo political dominance, neutralizing his role as a staunch opposition leader (Mohammed, 2024, p. 112). Similarly, following renewed conflicts in northern Ethiopia, factions of the OLF issued press releases aligning with federal

military objectives, illustrating a semblance of opposition wherein ethnonationalist solidarity overrides democratic contestation (OLF Press Release, 2023, p. 2).

5. Mechanisms of Absolute State Control: Military, Intelligence, and Diplomatic Capture

5.1 Military Appointments, High Offices, and Command Structures

The leadership of Ethiopia's federal military and regional security apparatus is highly centralized, with Oromo-PP loyalists and veteran commanders holding the most critical strategic commands, service branches, and special units:

- **Apex Strategic and Service Branch Commands:**
    - *Chief of General Staff of the ENDF:* **Field Marshal Birhanu Jula**—highest-ranking military officer in Ethiopia and Oromo-PP cornerstone controlling joint operational planning and enforcing federal O-PP policy with absolute loyalty to Abiy Ahmed (Addis Standard, 2026, p. 1).
    - *Ethiopian Air Force:* **Lieutenant General Yilma Merdasa** (Chief Commander)—manages a modernized, drone-heavy aerial shield serving as the primary tactical lever for crushing regional insurgencies (Fana MC English, 2026, p. 14).
    - *Special Operations and Commando Command:* **Lieutenant General Shuma Abdeta** (Chief Commander)—directs elite commando and airborne units deployed in high-risk asymmetrical warfare.
    - *Ethiopian Navy:* **Rear Admiral Michael Jema**—oversees the rebuilding of naval infrastructure tied to maritime and port access negotiations in the Horn of Africa.
    - *Republican Guard:* **Major General Abdi Toressa**—commands the elite Praetorian unit tasked with protecting the Prime Minister, his family, and key regime installations from internal coups.
    - *Oromia Special Forces and Regional Enforcement:* Answer strictly to hardline O-PP cadres under Oromia President Shimelis Abdisa, with regional enforcement coordination involving figures such as **Demelash Gebremichael**.
- **Major Geographic Army Commands:**
    - *Western Command:* **Lieutenant General Mesele Meseret Tegegn** (Chief Commander) and **Major General Meseret Duba**—securing western Oromia, Benishangul-Gumuz, and the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) corridor.

    - *Southern Command:* **Lieutenant General Solomon Etefa**—overseeing southern border belts, serving as a tactical reserve and containing threats along southern Oromia.
    - *Northwest Command:* **Lieutenant General Birhanu Bekele** (Chief Commander) and **Major General Kumsa Shugi** (Field Commander)—positioned over volatile conflict zones bordering Sudan and directing high-intensity field operations against anti-regime forces (Wikipedia, 2026, p. 2).
    - *Central Command:* **Major General Belay Seyoum**—securing the central belt, critical trade routes, and immediate capital reinforcements.
    - *Eastern Command:* **Major General Mashausha Almu**—monitoring border stability and port transport corridors across Somali and Afar regions.
    - *Northern Command:* **Major General Harigot Seyoum**—managing the heavily militarized post-Pretoria agreement landscape in Tigray and tense border positions near Eritrea.
- **Intelligence and Logistics Gatekeepers:**
    - *Chief of Defense Intelligence:* **Major General Getachew Gudina**—acts as the information gatekeeper, overseeing national military intelligence, detecting internal dissent within the ranks, tracking cross-regional armed coalitions such as the Tsimdo network, and coordinating border intelligence.
    - *Chief of ENDF Logistics Command:* **Lieutenant General Abdurahman Ismail**—acts as the supply-line enforcer, controlling procurement, distribution, and movement of heavy weaponry, ammunition, and rations for all ENDF field commands, preventing mutinies and keeping active conflict theaters supplied (POA English, 2026, p. 28).

5.2 Structural Coordination and High-Tech Surveillance Synchronization

The linkage between federal Oromo generals and Shimelis Abdisa's Oromia regional government operates seamlessly through parallel tracks that directly embody the dual-state saddle. Executive orders flow from Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed at the apex into two simultaneous channels: (1) the federal military wing (ENDF, military intelligence, and UAV operations led by Field Marshal Birhanu Jula and Major General Getachew Gudina), and (2) the **regional political administration** (Oromia executive leadership under President Shimelis Abdisa overseeing regional police and local administrative assets).

Both tracks converge directly into the secretive Koree Nageenyaa. Federal military intelligence and logistical support funnel downward while regional administrative

directives and local intelligence funnel upward, bypassing standard bureaucratic bottlenecks to produce unified field execution—rapid counter-insurgency operations, extrajudicial detentions, and targeted neutralizations. Geographically, Shimelis Abdisa's regional forces form a protective ring around Addis Ababa while Lieutenant General Abdurahman Ismail's logistics command uniformly equips both federal and regional Oromia forces, shielding the capital under Mayor Adanech Abebe from peripheral rebellions.

This synchronization is powered by a high-tech surveillance ecosystem developed under the Digital Ethiopia 2030 strategy. Deep-reconnaissance unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs)—including Chinese-made Wing Loong I, Iranian **Mohajer-6**, and Russian **Orion-E** drones—capture high-resolution imagery and electronic emissions over active zones, streaming raw telemetry directly to federal control rooms at Harar Meda Air Base and INSA. The Ethiopian Artificial Intelligence Institute applies machine learning for object classification, predictive analytics, and automated target tracking to isolate weapon caches and insurgent movements. The **Joint Drone Technology Center** (a joint venture between INSA and the Ethiopian Air Force) converts this intelligence into standardized combat data packages beamed via encrypted satellite networks to joint regional operations rooms for precision drone strikes or immediate ground roundups (Fana MC English, 2026, p. 2).

The tactical handoff from federal intelligence to localized enforcement is bridged by three key police commissioners:

- **General Demelash Gebremichael** (Federal Police Commissioner General): Federal-regional integrator and close Abiy confidant who drives law-enforcement tech overhauls and oversees the UAV Simulation Training Center.
- **General Diriba Mekonnin** (Oromia Police Commissioner General): Regional tactical enforcer working alongside Shimelis Abdisa to translate AI-processed intelligence into local counter-insurgency, mass detentions, and geographic security rings.
- **Ararsa Merdasa** (Former Oromia Police Commissioner and Senior Security Advisor): Institutional enforcer who established the blueprint for bypassing formal judicial channels to execute sweeping anti-insurgency campaigns based on federal security briefs.

When military intelligence flags a threat, data flows directly to Demelash Gebremichael's federal network and Diriba Mekonnin's regional command, enabling

localized forces to bypass judicial warrants and execute swift, targeted ground operations (Borkena, 2026, p. 17).

5.3 Diplomatic Corps and Strategic Embassies

Externally, the dual state preserves international legitimacy and financial lifelines by bypassing traditional Ministry of Foreign Affairs career tracks to appoint trusted political heavyweights—particularly former EPRDF regional executives and Oromo political/military loyalists—to decisive embassies.

The strategic placements break down across three distinct spheres of interest:

1. **Global Superpowers and Geopolitical Anchors (Political Heavyweights):**
    - *United States:* **Binalf Andualem Ashenef** (former EPRDF/Amhara Deputy President) stationed in Washington, D.C., to navigate U.S. congressional pressures and human rights scrutiny.
    - *China:* **Tefera Derbew Yimam** (former federal minister and veteran politician) assigned to Beijing to manage Ethiopia's largest bilateral creditor and infrastructure partner.
2. **Economic Lifelines and Gulf Capital (Oromo Executives and Technocrats):**
    - *The Gulf:* **Dr. Muktar Kedir** (Saudi Arabia) and **H.E. Dr. Jemal Beker** (United Arab Emirates)—high-profile Oromo leaders ensuring direct, personalized access to Gulf monarchies providing crucial investments, sovereign loans, and geopolitical backing.
    - *Asia-Pacific Wealth:* **Daba Debele** (Japan) and **H.E. Dessie Dalkie** (South Korea)—former OPDO and SEPDM regional leaders managing major sources of technological investment and developmental aid.
3. **Regional Security and Military Partnerships (The Generals):**
    - *Kenya:* **General Bacha Debele** (senior Oromo military commander) placed in Nairobi to manage cross-border security dynamics, rebel movements, and the Horn of Africa's most critical neighboring relationship.
    - *Turkey:* **General Adem Mohamed** (former Chief of Staff and intelligence director) placed in Ankara to manage the vital military-industrial partnership, specifically the procurement of combat drones decisive in internal conflicts.

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6. Ideological, Religious, and Informational Hegemony

6.1 Ethnocratic Theocracy and State Control of Religious Institutions

To neutralize historically autonomous religious institutions capable of inspiring unified national opposition, the Oromo-PP regime has fused ethnic politics with evangelical Pentecostalism, producing what a growing body of scholarship characterizes as an emerging ethnocratic theocracy (Group Transition Charter, 2019, p. 2):

1. **Doctrinal Foundations of the Prosperity Party:** Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed and the PP have increasingly grounded their political doctrine in Pentecostalism and the Prosperity Gospel, framing political rule through "positive thinking" and presenting economic prosperity as divine reward (Østebø, 2025, p. 1; The Economist, 2018, p. 45). While Abiy has publicly sought to appease traditional institutions by stating one "cannot think of Ethiopia without the Orthodox Church" (Østebø, 2025, p. 1), critics argue that the PP's ideological core—and its *Medemer* (synergy) philosophy linked to Christian nationalism—actively marginalizes both the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church (EOTC) and traditional Islam, framing political dissent as spiritual negativity or rebellion against a divinely ordained order (Amba Professionals Union, 2023, p. 1; Gebreselassie, 2023, p. 4).
2. **State Interference in the Orthodox Synod and the Mejlis:** Academic and political analyses document deliberate state interference to divide and co-opt traditional religious leadership. Haustein, Østebø, and Tomass (2026, p. 322) note that Abiy established a nine-member government committee tasked with restructuring the Ethiopian Islamic Affairs Supreme Council (EIASC, or the Mejlis) and overseeing its theological and legal foundations, alongside allegations of installing Oromo-PP-sympathetic figures. Similarly, in early 2023, when a breakaway group of clergy in Oromia declared an independent Oromia Orthodox Synod, the EOTC and human rights monitors accused Oromo-PP cadres of providing state backing to weaken the central authority of the EOTC (Amnesty International, 2023, p. 22; Plaut, 2023, p. 2).
3. **Harassment, Violence, and Targeted Massacres:** The Amba Professionals Union (2023, pp. 2–3) reports unprecedented violence under this Prosperity Gospel-oriented regime, including the murders of Orthodox priests, the demonization of traditional faiths, the demolition of historical churches under the guise of urban development, arrests of faithful believers, and the forced confiscation of traditional church clothing bearing the Ethiopian tricolor. The government has further been accused of complicity—through inaction or direct facilitation—in ongoing massacres of Orthodox Christians in regions such as Arsi.

4. **Incitement of Inter-Religious Conflict:** By intertwining state power with evangelical tenets and intervening in Orthodox and Islamic institutions, observers accuse the PP regime of weaponizing a "divide and rule" strategy across inter-religious and inter-ethnic fault lines, eroding Ethiopia's historical inter-faith coexistence to consolidate political hegemony (Group Transition Charter, 2019, p. 5).
5. **The Protestant State Apparatus:** Østebø (2025, p. 1, 12) observes that Abiy has systematically elevated Protestant politicians to high-ranking state, regional, and mayoral offices. To legitimize this hegemony, the regime allegedly funnels state resources to Prosperity Gospel prophets, leverages transnational evangelical networks to lobby foreign governments (Haustein et al., 2026, p. 323), and uses the distribution of wealth, alms, and clothing to attract impoverished followers from Orthodox and Islamic backgrounds.

6.2 Media Control, the "Cyber Army," and Digital Propaganda

Alongside religious co-optation, the dual state spends billions of Birr to monopolize the national narrative. Opponents document that the Oromo-PP deploys a well-funded digital militia—combining paid social media activists with state-affiliated broadcasters such as the Oromia Broadcasting Network (OBN)—to aggressively promote party agendas, discredit opposition, suppress dissenting journalism, and rewrite the historical context of regional conflicts (Committee to Protect Journalists, 2024, p. 8).

- **Structure and Operations of the Digital Apparatus:** Rather than organic grassroots activism, the PP's informal "cyber army" operates through rigid command structures. Directives are disseminated via WhatsApp, where group administrators distribute pre-written narratives, designated targets, and operational instructions (BBC News, 2024, para. 6). Operators rely heavily on astroturfing, frequently managing up to ten fraudulent profiles to fabricate consensus through coordinated inauthentic behavior (Access Now, 2024, p. 12). Participation is enforced coercively: over 3,500 district (*woreda*) leaders in Addis Ababa are strictly monitored and required to submit screenshot evidence proving they posted organized written comments rather than passive likes or shares (BBC News, 2024, paras. 12–14).
- **Scale, Expenditure, and Diaspora Mobilization:** While the cyber army's budget remains classified within opaque state finances, its expansion parallels an 88% surge in national defense spending to approximately $1 billion in 2022 amid civil conflict (SIPRI, 2023, p. 4). Mobilization extends abroad through diaspora operatives and "ENDF ambassadors" who circumvent domestic

internet blackouts and project regime propaganda internationally (United Nations Human Rights Council [UNHRC], 2023, p. 18).

- **Disinformation, AI, and Targeting of Dissent:** When former Minister of Peace **Taye Dendea** publicly criticized the administration, his social media accounts were bombarded with over 14,600 comments, hundreds traced directly to coordinated WhatsApp directives from the cyber army (BBC News, 2024, para. 20). The regime also deploys Artificial Intelligence (AI), deepfakes, and undated doctored multimedia to stoke ethnic anxiety and bombard critics and targeted ethnic groups with dehumanizing propaganda correlated with offline violence (Access Now, 2024, p. 15).
- **Obfuscation of Human Rights Abuses:** Pervasive misinformation combined with state-imposed internet blackouts severely hinders independent documentation of atrocities (UNHRC, 2023, p. 24), drowning out victims' testimonies under competing state-sponsored counter-narratives (Amnesty International, 2023, p. 12).
- **International and Corporate Responses:** Amnesty International and the UN-appointed International Commission of Human Rights Experts on Ethiopia (ICHREE) have explicitly linked social media platforms to real-world atrocities. Amnesty International (2023, p. 5) concluded that Meta's algorithmic amplification of inflammatory content directly contributed to targeted killings of Tigrayans, including the murder of university professor **Meareg Amare**, prompting victims to file a lawsuit in the Kenyan High Court demanding a compensation fund and moderation overhaul (Amnesty International, 2023, p. 38). Tech platforms demonstrated systemic negligence: Meta did not designate Ethiopia as an "at-risk country" until 2021, lacked automated hate speech classifiers for local languages at the conflict's peak, and relied on just two fact-checking organizations with five combined employees to monitor Ethiopia's seven million Facebook users (Amnesty International, 2023, pp. 22–23). Similarly, X (formerly Twitter) failed to moderate genocidal content during the war (Access Now, 2024, p. 18).

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7. Political Economy of the Dual State: Corporate Capture, War Financing, and Macroeconomic Fallout

The final pillar sustaining the dual-state saddle is the systematic capture and redirection of Ethiopia's economic resources to enrich political-military insiders and finance internal warfare.

7.1 Corporate Consolidation and Elite Enrichment

Critics argue that the Prosperity Party has centralized economic power by bypassing standard procurement processes to cultivate favored corporate conglomerates. The Africa Yearbook Volume 21 (Brill, 2025, p. 43) documents how major government real estate and construction contracts have been aggressively awarded to favored firms such as the OVID Group. Opposition voices allege that these state-backed conglomerates function as cartels funneling public wealth to a newly minted class of billionaires and military generals while crowding out the traditional private sector.

7.2 Land Distribution and Forced Displacement

Because all land in Ethiopia is constitutionally state-owned, its allocation serves as a potent political weapon. Analysts and critics contend the regime abuses land distribution to reward military generals and party trustees with large tracts of land, particularly in and around Oromia. Human Rights Watch's World Report 2023 (pp. 200–202) and subsequent updates extensively document forced evictions, systemic violence, and mass displacements tied to land disputes and ethnic targeting, creating an environment where systemic contraband and elite resource hoarding proceed unchecked.

7.3 Vanity Resort Projects versus Social Infrastructure

Through initiatives such as *Gebeta Lehager* ("Dine for Ethiopia"), the administration has channeled billions of Birr into luxury eco-resorts and corridor development projects in sites such as Gorgora and Wonchi. International financial institutions—including the World Bank in its Ethiopia Economic Update (2018, p. 5, and subsequent reports)—have consistently warned against the federal government's expansionary fiscal policies and heavy state-driven spending, urging a shift to crowd in the private sector. Critics argue that foreign aid, scarce hard currency, and sovereign loans are misallocated toward non-economical vanity projects rather than repairing schools, universities, and manufacturing capacity.

7.4 Oligarchic War Financing and the Human Cost of Militarization

Sustaining multi-front internal wars requires vast financial outlays, cementing a symbiotic nexus between political power and oligarchic wealth. Favored conglomerates such as the OVID Group directly finance the ENDF: in May 2024, OVID constructed and handed over 248 apartments valued at 1.7 billion Birr to the Army Foundation (Capital Ethiopia, 2024, p. 1; Ethio Negari, 2024, p. 1), and its own corporate profile lists financial contributions to military operations during the Tigray conflict (Ovid Group Company Profile, 2024, p. 9). More broadly, political economy reviews of Ethiopia's state capitalism show the ruling party extracts massive

contributions from connected business elites to sustain its war machinery (U.S. Department of State, 2024, p. 7), rewarding oligarchs in return with lucrative reconstruction contracts and protected domestic monopolies that allow them to profit directly from the conflicts they finance (Ethiopia Today, 2026, p. 1).

Meanwhile, the human cost of this militarization has been devastating. During campaigns against insurgencies such as the Fano militia in the Amhara region, the ENDF has relied heavily on drone warfare—including a severe drone strike on August 13, 2023, in Finote Selam, Amhara, causing mass civilian casualties, as well as late-2026 drone strikes hitting displacement camps and civilian shelters in conflict zones. Critics underscore the stark paradox of the state constructing lavish luxury resorts while civilian infrastructure and schools are bombarded.

7.5 Macroeconomic Fallout and Debt Distress

The convergence of internal warfare, state capture, and resource misallocation has severely destabilized Ethiopia's macroeconomic foundations. According to the Joint Bank-Fund Debt Sustainability Analysis published by the IMF and World Bank (2025, p. 2), Ethiopia is officially in **debt distress** following its failure to meet Eurobond interest payments. The IMF's country report (2025, p. 6) documents that total public and publicly guaranteed debt exceeded 50% of GDP by mid-2024, compounded by severe currency depreciation and unchecked external borrowing. Having consolidated complete coercive, political, ideological, and economic control over both the Ethiopian federal center and the Oromia regional apparatus as demonstrated in Part I, this dual-state architecture establishes the operational foundation for the externalized territorial expansion and regional domination analyzed in **Part II**.

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