# Fano: A Mass Outrage for Amhara Existence, Justice and Ethiopian Unity

A statue of a person with a cape

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**Introduction**

This paper is a continuation of my previous work Fano: *A Living Saviour of The Amhara People And The Ethiopian Spirit – Analysis*[[1]](#footnote-1). A lot has happened since my last work. Having almost accurately predicted how Fano would become a game-changer, I have written several short articles about the movement**[[2]](#footnote-2)** [its original meaning being “a free peasant fighting to defend their homeland”, Ethiopia]**[[3]](#footnote-3)**. The accomplishment by the Fano fighters spanning during the last year have been astounding. I dare say that 85% of the Amhara region is controlled by the Fano fighters. In this article I will try to outline the successes, challenges, and opportunities of the resistance movement. Furthermore, some historical perspectives, cultural, as well as social aspects and further steps will be discussed. As it stands, the prime Minister’s latest attempt to scare the Amharas with yet another atrocious massacre using drones has failed to intimidate them. Indeed, it has backfired.

I start my article with this story. They say that wisdom comes with age, and wise sayings and wisdom quotes will give you better judgment and a sense of purpose in life. We could all use a little more wisdom to help us make it through the day.

An Old Farmer writes to his son who is in Prison:

"Dear Son, this year I won't be able to plant Potatoes because I can't dig the field by myself, I know if you are here, you would have helped me".

The Son writes back,

"Dad don't even think of digging the field because that's where I buried all the money I stole."

The Police read the letter and the next day the whole field was dug up looking for the money but nothing was found.

The following day the son wrote again,

'Now plant your Potatoes dad, it's the best I can do from here'

**Lesson:**

You can imprison someone, but you can never imprison their ideas or Wisdom. It also shows that even when physically constrained, one’s thoughts and actions can influence and bring about change.

I also had the opportunity to analyze tens of admiring songs embedded with valor and bravery and romantic, uplifting praise poems that span hundreds of years. Praise poem is a poem of tribute or gratitude. They express admiration, give homage, and even proclaim positive attributes. The purpose is to show how Fano has always been a hope for the subjugated segments of the population. Fano’s character, mission, and purpose are ingrained in the songs/poems.

***Poems and songs about Fano glory in war and battles***

► ፋኖ ታው ቃ ለህ?

በስራ አራሽ ነው አርብ ጁምዐ ሰጋጅ

በሰንበት አስቀ ዳሽ ፤

ጠላት የመ ጣ እንደሁ ተንበርክኮ ተኳሽ፤

ደሞዝ የማ ይፈልግ የማ ይሻ ቁራሽ።

ዳ ዊ ት በደረቱ ፣ ኪታብ በብብቱ

ነፍጡ በትካሻ፤

ተ ሸ ክሞ እሚ ዘም ት እሱ ነው ሀበሻ ።

እሱ ነው ነፍ ጠ ኛ እሱ ኮነው ፋኖ፤

ጠላትን የሚ ያስቀር ከጫ ካው አፍ ኖ ።

ፀሀይ ሳይበግረው እረሀብ ውሃ ጥም ፤

ይዋደቃል እንጂ ፋኖ ሀገር አይሰጠም።

► ፋኖ ታውቃለህ?

በአርንጓዴ ቢጫ በቀዩ ሰንደቅ ላይ፤

ከፍ አርጎ የሚ ሰቅል ኢትዮጲያን የሚያሳይ።

ግንባሩን ለጥይት እግሩን ለጋሬጣ፤

እኔ ልሙትና አንተ ነፃ ው ጣ።

የሚልህ እሱ ነው ፋኖ ባላገሩ፤

የማይደራደር በአገርና ክብ ሩ።

አራሹ ገበሬ ቀዳሹ መ ምሬ፤

ፋኖ ማለት እሱ ፋኖ ማለት እኔ፤

ከፊት የም ቀድም ሲነካ ወ ገኔ።

ዶክተር ፕሮፌሰር

መ ምህሩ ሳይቀ ር

የአማራ ልጅ ሁሉ ፋኖ እኮ ነው ጓዴ ፤

ከልክ የሚ ያስገባ ባንዳና ወንበዴ።

ድ ል ለመላው አማ ራ ፋኖ!

Via ቢዛሞ ሚዲያ

►ፋኖ አገሩ ገባ ሳይሰናበትኝ ፤

ያ ጀግና ወታደር ሰውም አያደርገኝ።

ኧረ ሳበው ፋኖ  ሳበው መሸብ ህ ፤

የጆ ቢራ  ( የአራት ኪሎ ) እራት ግብር አለብህ ።

► የወንድ ልጅ እናት ታጠቂ በገመ ድ ፤

ልጅሺን አሞራ እንጂ አይቀብረውም ዘመ ድ።

ከባልንጀራውች ማ ታ ተለየ ፤

እንደ አጥቢያ ኮከብ ሲነጋ ታየ።

የምር ተኳ ሹን እኛ ስናውቀው ፤

ዝናር እቅፌን ደባለቀው ።

ወዘት በይ ልቤ እንደ ጀበና፤

አልወጣ ልሽም የጦር ባፈና።

►ተኩሶ ሲነጉድ የፈሪ ልምደኛ ፤

ፊት ለፊት ተጋዳይ ፋኖ እንደ መጋኛ ።

ኧረ ተው በሉት ያንን ባለ ቡሎ፤

ሰጠው ለንፋስ አንጓሎ እንጓሎ ።

እንደ ቆላ ወፍ እንደ ግሪሳ ፤

ያረፈው ልቤ ደግሞ ተነሳ።

እልም ባለው ጫካ እልም ባለው ዱ ር ፤

ሲነጋገር ያድራል ከመው ዜሩ ጋር።

(አማ ረኝ መው ዜር አማረኝ /የመ ብሬ ዘፈን

► ፋኖ አገሩ ገባ፥ ሳይሰናበተኝ፣

እሸኘው ነበረ፥ ም ንም ቢታክተኝ።

► ኩታ ዬም አለቀ፥ ተባኖ ተባኖ፣

ቀሚ ሴም አለቀ፥ ተባኖ ተባኖ፣

አሁን ያለብሰኛል፥ ስደተኛው ፋኖ።

► ፋኖ ፋኖ አለችኝ፥ ፍንን ያርጋትና፣

ያ ጀግና ወታደር ማ ለቷ ቀረና።

(ይኸ ኛው ቅኔ ነው ። ህብ ረ ቃ ሉ ወታደር ላይ ነው ። ሰሙ "ወታደር" ሲሆን፥ ወርቁ "ወጥቶ አደር" ማለት ነው። አድራሻ የሌለው አመ ጸኛ እንደማለት ነው ።)

►ፋኖን እወዳለሁ፥ ፋኖንስ አልጠላ፣

ሲደክመኝ አርፋለሀ፥ ከጎፈሬው ጥላ።

►ፋኖ ተሰማ ራ፥ ፋኖ ተሰማ ራ፣

እንደ ሆች ሚ ን፥ እንደ ቼ ጉ ቪራ።

►ፋኖ ግባ ጫካ፥ ፋኖ ግባ ደን፣

ጨካኙን ገዳዩን፥ አው ሬ ልታ ድን።

**The Balance of Power Between the Abiy Regime and Fano!**

Because the Abiy regime is in power, it controls the so-called Ethiopian Armed Forces, the bureaucracy, the 900bn birr national budget, secret funds from Ethiopia's historical enemies, diplomatic relations with foreign countries and state-owned banks. However, its policies and measures are ethnicity-based and generally anti-Ethiopia. Hence its control of state power is being used to undermine Ethiopia and is against the general will of the Ethiopian people.

Fano on the other hand is, first and foremost, fighting for the survival of the Amhara people against whom the Abiy regime has launched a war with chilling echoes of ethnic persecution under a tailor-made state-of-emergency law. Fano upholds, as the songs and poems vividly describe, the equality of all the 85 languages and ethnic groups of Ethiopia under Ethiopianism and is therefore steadfastly pro-Ethiopia. Fano is thus, so to speak, the military wing of the majority of Ethiopians and therefore waging a people's war against the revanchist, hegemonic, and ethno-nationalist Abiy regime. Currently, the balance of power appears to be in favor of the Abiy regime in terms of arms and finance but at the end of the day, it is people who use the arms and finance to fight and win the war. A good example of this is the fact that thousands of the regime army are surrendering to the Fano with their advanced weaponry, disillusioned with the war.

Fano has the people and they will take the arms and put them in the hands of the people where they should belong and win the war for themselves and Ethiopia. It is thus a matter of time before Fano decisively wins the war and seizes central power. Already the course of the war has turned decisively in favor of Fano, which has won every ground battle it has fought with the Abiy regime so far. The yardsticks used to make the above conclusion are based on 1) cause and morale 2) general war strategy 3) intelligence network 4) logistics and terrain 5) provisions.

**Fano must win because,**

1. of the correctness of its cause of legitimate self-defense against a policy of ethnic cleansing, war crimes and state-sponsored genocide.
2. of the need to defend the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Ethiopia against Abiy's program of national disintegration and regional secession.
3. of the emergency requirement to maintain peace, law and order throughout Ethiopia
4. of the promotion practical ways and means of accelerating not just economic but also scientific and technological development of Ethiopia.

It is self-evident that there is no other group to hold power after the defeat of Abiy's genocidal regime, i.e. other than Fano! But in what form of government should Fano hold power: as a military junta, as a military/civilian provisional administration, or what? A very difficult question to ask. But let us first see what no other power can do except Fano in Ethiopia: the abolition of the ethnic apartheid constitution written by TPLF and OLF and imposed by TPLF and now by OPDO/OLF by force on the Ethiopian people; bringing criminals including genocides and ethnic cleansers to justice; rebuilding and strengthening the Ethiopian military; maintaining peace, law and order throughout Ethiopia; initiating rehabilitation, recovery and reconstruction programs; setting up a representative commission to draft a new constitution; holding a free and fair referendum on the draft constitution; and holding a free and fair general election in which Fano's political party (its nucleus has already been created) will participate.

Hence Fano may have to form a military/civilian provisional administration possibly under a provisional charter to successfully implement all the major difficult tasks outlined above. Most Ethiopians are eagerly waiting for a healthy and positive military and political evolution of the so-far spectacular rise of the Amhara Fano Revolution. Fano has no choice other than such a unified military command to confront simultaneously several enemy troop concentrations at different locations across the Amhara Kilil and drive them completely out of the region. This will help Fano to plan and engineer the final concerted march on Addis Ababa where the core of the genocidal regime is ensconced.

**Historical perspective and Marginalization of the Amharas**

According to Professor Worku Aberra, a professor of economics at Dawson College[[4]](#footnote-4) ‘the cause of the Fano movement is rooted in the Amhara people’s enduring experience of 32 years of economic marginalization, political subjugation, and social humiliation. This prolonged injustice has given rise to the Amhara community’s demand for dignity, equity, and fairness. Certain opportunistic politicians, including individuals within the Ethiopian state, have unfairly stigmatized the Amhara community as ‘chauvinists’ and ‘armed settlers’. This labeling has created a hostile atmosphere which has critically fostered political persecution, discriminatory measures, and even outright violence against the Amharas. The state-sanctioned insult of the Amharas, disguised as political discourse, has legitimized the attack on Amharas by biased reporters, deranged individuals, frustrated academics, and warped politicians’. For the past three decades, the practice of vilifying the Amhara community has been adopted as a state policy. The government’s discriminatory measures against Amharas are conspicuous, spanning from restricting their entry into Addis Ababa to demolishing their homes, freezing their bank accounts, and imprisoning numerous Amhara activists, professors, journalists, and bloggers. These enduring injustices have driven the Amhara people to resort to armed resistance in their pursuit of justice.

The recent wave of attacks on Amharas in the Amhara region is on the verge of becoming a full-blown genocide. Many of these abuses have been hidden from view. Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed’s government has imposed restrictions throughout the Amhara region and obstructed the efforts of independent investigators, journalists, and humanitarian workers, making it difficult to verify accounts from the region.

Security forces in the Ethiopian capital, Addis Ababa, have targeted Amharas including children and older persons, with arbitrary arrests and mass detentions as part of an escalating crackdown. Most detainees are being held without charge or access to a lawyer. These mass arrests have instilled such a climate of fear that Amharas are scared they could be rounded up any time in Addis Ababa. The arrests have intensified since the government declared a bogus state-of-emergency, a few months ago for the second time, as Fano, Amhara militia took control of strategic towns in the Amhara region. Arrests are conducted through house-to-house searches by security forces with support from vigilante groups who check the IDs of people on the street. Detainees, including civil servants, Orthodox priests, lawyers, journalists, and political analysts are being held in schools, youth centers, and other informal detention centers across Addis Ababa because police stations are overflowing.

As I write this paper drone strikes have continued killing hundreds of civilians in several towns in the region. There have been scores of drone strikes in the Amhara region since 8 months ago. The targets have been densely populated urban areas which have resulted in numerous casualties and destruction of properties. The government has failed to fulfill its duty to protect the peace of the people and has used drones and warplanes together with its mighty military forces [infantry] to kill the Amharas. In a recent article entitled, *The Hidden Genocide in Ethiopia*, Graham Peebles (March 28, 2024)[[5]](#footnote-5) wrote that the shadowy  [declaration](https://www.hrw.org/news/2023/08/09/deepening-crisis-ethiopias-amhara-region) (state of emergency) gives the government far-reaching powers to arrest/imprison people without due process, impose curfews, ban the right to assembly and search property without a warrant. Draconian powers that the government has employed widely and indiscriminately. Violence and unlawful arrests against Amhara people have increased exponentially. In the five years since Abiy. came to power, tens of thousands of Amhara have been killed and millions displaced from Oromia, the largest region in the country; their land, property, and cattle stolen by Oromo extremists, Peebles wrote. In its recent report the Amhara Association of America (AAA), documented 1606 deaths, and injuries to 824 Amhara civilians (August – February 2024); 37 drone attacks, resulting in 333 civilians killed; the rape of at least 210 young girls and women; mass arrests of over 10,000 Amharas detainees facing physical and psychological torture”. These numbers according to AAA, shocking as they are, represent a small fraction of the total killed, raped, and arrested.

*Fano and its noble cause: Historical Excursion*

Fano is a historical term used in Ethiopian struggles against injustice and foreign invaders. It is mainly shown as a youth and young adults (including middle-aged persons) movement that has played a significant role in preserving the concept of Ethiopian nationhood. As a freedom fighter group, it has emerged from within the Amhara ethnic group and has features reminiscent of classical political, religious, or even social movements that drive youthful frustrations into acts of agitation until they achieve a measure of reform. Traditionally, the Fano struggle had focused on fending off attacks against Ethiopia. In recent years, Fano has become a household name and a crucial movement tasked with saving the very existence of the Amhara population as well as the integrity of Ethiopia. In this, it differs from other similar movements in the country. Fano is a defiant and patriotic person which can shoulder an Ethiopia that is arising from the ashes bequeathed to them. This revolutionary generation and movement has to be nurtured. Fano is not just an embodiment of physical defiance but also an intellectual movement that abhors ethnic fascism, narrow nationalism, apartheid policies, internal colonialism, and all forms of pseudo-legal acts of political corruption. Instead, it upholds a civic sense of public duty, patriotism, and vision for the good of the entire country[[6]](#footnote-6).

Fano’s potential as a powerful social movement that has already proven capable of transforming the course of Ethiopian history that has been “soiled” by ethnic chauvinists and radical ethnically-based movements. In this article, I argue that we have much to learn from our Fano who are already engaged in mobilizing their peers, families, and communities towards defending the marginalized ethnic groups in Ethiopia and fostering positive social transformation.

Fano is a traditional volunteer fighter, or a rebel against the system and landlords, mostly in Gonder and Gojjam. Some of them act alone or may band together into groups[[7]](#footnote-7). They normally walk around on foot, that is why they are called Fanos, according to my respondent. The essence of Fano has changed from 2016 onwards. They became defiant Amhara mostly youngsters but also elders who were fed up with the hegemony exercised by a small Tigrayan clique over the Amhara and the rest of Ethiopia.

The brave story of Eshete Moges and his son Yitagesu Moges embodies the Fano spirit. No Surrender: a father and his son— an extraordinary act of heroism and valor that continues to live forever—the story reads:

Eshete Moges was born in the Qewot district near Shewa Robit. The 56-year-old man was the father of seven children and a resident of Shewaroit. He was also a businessman in town. When the troops of the Tigray People’s Liberation Front (TPLF) approached Ataye, which is near Shewarobit, in late November 2021, he tried to mobilize fighters in Shewa Robit and asked them to fight. His words were that “If we don’t defend Shewa Robit, who will? I will not leave Shewa Robit and go”. First, he started fighting the TPLF forces from Shewa Robit. Since he was defiant to everyone else, his mother had to intervene, as in tradition, to get him to leave the city. He moved with his son to a place called Salaysh, which is only 15 kilometers from Shewa Robit, but the TPLF forces also reached Salaysh in a very short time. He was again advised to abandon Salaysh and withdraw. This time he refused and decided to fight the TPLF forces with his son. When the TPLF troops reached the house where they lived, Eshete Moges took down five TPLF forces. His son killed two others when they tried to break into the building of the house they lived in. The son had only one handgun, but his father was armed with an AK-47. The son had to go out to get a rifle from one of the TPLF forces that he shot. And they had to change their positions. They retreated to the back of the house, where there was a sorghum farm. Unfortunately, Eshete’s son, Yitagesu, was killed in the process. In the meantime, Eshete had to call his brother-in-law and tell him his situation. “Listen to me. Yitagesu has been killed. Can you hear me? Pay attention. He has been killed by the sorghum farm near Assefa Taye’s house. I am near his body. I have been surrounded and I will die there too. Our body will lie there … I’ll pay you in heaven.” The brother-in-law tried to convince the father to leave his son’s body and flee, but the father refused and decided to fight until his last breath. The number of TPLF forces he killed following the phone call is unknown. But he killed two right after TPLF fighters killed his son. Since then, the retrieved transcript of the telephone conversation between Eshete and his brother-in-law has been published, offering Ethiopians of all walks of life a tangible example of duty and sacrifice in what is, to all accounts, an extremely moving and brave act. [[8]](#footnote-8)

Ato Eshete’s speech a minute before he died typically symbolizes and embodies the essence of Fano. That is his brevity that he chose to be by his dead son’s body; that he prays for Ethiopia; that he is spiritual (religiosity); and that his death has a higher purpose. It is a moving speech. In a similar case, the story of Molla Melaku[[9]](#footnote-9), a brave warrior, his valour in Fano’s life and unwavering courage is engaging.

….Melaku joined the Fano movement about three years ago in connection with the invasion of the Amhara region. Melaku had been devastated by the large-scale killings and grave human rights violations which followed the implementation of the ethnic-federalist system in the country, according to his brother. In most of the cases, the mass murders were silent with perpetrators from various ethno-militant groups. Ethnically motivated attacks against the Amhara have been reported on a weekly basis, with mass graves being discovered in various locations where Melaku lived. The Popular Movement “Fano” widely appeared during the latest civil war in Ethiopia. The members of this militia fought alongside the Ethiopian military to stop the advancement of the Tigray Defence Forces, who controlled large areas in the Amhara region and were proceeding towards the capital Addis Ababa. Fanos were not rewarded for their heroic fight against the invaders. Abiy Ahmed’s regime wanted to disarm the Fano fighters and the Amhara special force. Which is why Melaku, who felt betrayed by the Abiy’s dishonest and apartheid policy of endangering the lives of the Amhara people, went back to the Fano forces. He had been fighting the last 8 months pushing back the regime’s forces. According to his mates he was very brave, inspiring and determined. His 19 years old younger brother had been by his side all along until the last moment: that is, until Melaku was shot in the back, specifically on his right side. This happened during a fierce battle against Oromo speaking soldiers. His younger brother, Adimo Melaku, carried his wounded brother in the back and brought him to the Woldiya hospital. According to some Fano fighters which I managed to reach, Melaku had shot scores of the soldiers before being wounded. His unwavering courage has won him respect among his mates. His brother told me that Melaku was extremely disciplined, resolute and firm in all what he did. Once he was brought to the hospital by his brother, Adim Melaku, Molla was being treated for his wounds via Glucose and other tubes. Ventilator, Monitoring equipment and IV lines and pumps were applied. His mother was by his side. The soldiers entered the hospital and were searching for him singing and shouting in Oromigna. They had information that the young man who was the fierce fighter was wounded and under treatment. Whoever informed them we have no clues for now. The Oromigna speaking soldiers broke down the tubes and other medical equipment installed for the patient. They mistreated the mother. They were unrespectful of the medical staff. They took him to unknown place and cut his throat. The older brother who I talked to confirmed that the neck was severed or sliced off. What I heard from other sources was that they ran over his dead body using military vehicle. The brutality is unspeakable. When they took him away from the hospital bed, Melaku shouted that *he is a proud Amhara; that he is proud of being associated with the Asamnew Brigade. Amhara shall win! Ethiopia will prevail!*These are his last words. His heroic death has inspired hundreds of young people including some medical staff to join the Fano movement.

Despite being an unpaid, under-resourced, self-armed volunteer defence group, Fano has proven to be a complete game-changer in the current war directed at destroying Ethiopia and eradicating the Amhara population. Fano has continued its offensive on the enemy with perseverance and bravery until the safety of the people of Amhara is assured and until the Abiy soldiers cease to cause suffering on Ethiopians ever again. Fano has carried out successive lightning offensives on enemy forces that had been deployed in the Amhara region. Currently, they seem to be gathering momentum to fully control the region and advance to Addis Ababa. And Fano is determined to carry out successive offensives and score victories until the safety of the people of Ethiopia is secured regardless of where the enemy resides and how intensely it fortifies itself. The Fanos are feared groups of fighters, not because they fight for glory but to save their people from annihilation. They are the embodiment of the Amhara spirit and the defendant of Ethiopia throughout history. The government sees them with suspicion, fearing the potential force of the movement in unifying Ethiopia and protecting the Amharas who are in a precarious situation due to the endless succession of genocidal acts committed against them. They endured sabotage and unfair treatment by some corners of the army and local governments. Despite attacks from every side, Fano has grown in strength and confidence and become a *formidable force* to be reckoned with.

In a video I watched a few days ago, I saw a Fanno commander teaching his fellow subordinates to treat captured Government soldiers humanely in a God-fearing, compassionate, and disciplined manner even though the soldiers have been terrorizing people, by killing civilians summarily, creating unprecedented and unmanageable destruction to private and public property, tarnishing religious site, monasteries for the last 9 months. In this respect, Fano symbolizes "Mission first, people always.” It is a motto that rings true and cuts to the heart of what the Fano is about. Fano exists to deploy, fight, and win our nation’s wars as we witnessed time and again, yet every aspect of operations remains a human endeavor. A Fano is behind every *weapon system* to accomplish the mission. It is a 'public soldier', an Ethiopian son or daughter, who takes an oath to support and defend the lives of Amhara and the Ethiopian nation at large, who stands ready and courageously on point for the nation, and who understands the sacrifice involved in being part of a purpose greater than self. Innumerable videos show the 'super humanity' of Fano. Tesfaye Demmellash (Dec. 2023) aptly wrote that in recent and ongoing engagements, the armed struggle has smashed the existing brutal Oromo regime in the Amhara regions, succeeding by carrying the growing patriotic resistance beyond immediate, tactical defensive lines in a more attacking, longer-term strategic direction. In a few months, the movement has achieved notable gains, reversing the Abiy regime’s military invasion intended to disarm and neutralize the *Fanno* militia.[[10]](#footnote-10)

These renewed movements by Fano to destroy the enemy reflect our current digital age, in which young people can increasingly connect in their own countries and across borders. In doing so, they are exposing the gap between the promise of opportunity and the grim reality of unequal chances that Ethiopians and in particular the Amharas had to endure. The brave and moving way in which, out of their anguish and pain, Fano is telling the world that the discrimination, marginalization, and ethnic cleansing of the Amhara will be a thing of the past and that they are determined to change the political landscape, perhaps permanently and fundamentally. It’s not just in Ethiopia that a youth-led revolution is coming alive. In Africa and around the world, young people are becoming a power in their own right. Millions of young people are now engaged in what has become the civil rights struggle of our time – the fight for every child’s right to go to school, and to do so in safety and live a decent life. The Amharas have been deprived of those basic rights since TPLF came to power in 1991 and now it has reached the climax. In the recent invasion of the Amhara region by the TPLF, thousands of schools, health centers, and other basic amenities and infrastructures have been looted or destroyed. The intellectual and cultural genocide is well documented. That same invasion and crimes against humanity have continued or further aggravated by TheEthiopian NationalDefense Force (ENDF).

It is an important moment for us authentic Ethiopians– both inspiring and chastening for those of us who were children of a 1960s or 70s cultural revolution [student movement] that failed to fulfill its promise, and now find ourselves overtaken by new movements with far more global potential for good. The torch is not being passed to this new generation; this new generation has had to seize it. They deserve our support. There are other youth movements in Ethiopia with some features of Fano: The *Querro* in Oromia, the *Ejeto* in Sidama, the *Zarma* in Gurage, and the *Yelega* in Wolayta.[[11]](#footnote-11) There should be a concerted effort to inculcate the ideology and principles of the Fano movement into these groups in an attempt to create a multi-ethnic force

**The fluid politics of Ethiopia and the role to be played by Fano**

In the past four years, several thousands of Amhara residents have been murdered and brutalized, and hundreds of thousands displaced and made homeless. The TPLF had been planting the seeds of hate and it is directly and indirectly behind the pogroms and genocidal crimes against, in particular, the Amhara ethnic group and the Orthodox faithful. The U.N. office on genocide prevention has condemned targeted attacks against civilians based on their ethnicity or religion, including hate speech and incitement to violence, in Ethiopia. It has warned that ethnic violence “has reached an alarming level over the past two years,” and the new rhetoric sets a “dangerous trajectory that heightens the risk of genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity”. The alarm was *raised* two years ago.

The past year and in particular the last seven months have been a hell of a life for the Amharas. The destruction of properties, and life is unimaginable. The Amhara region is the frontline for the bloody conflict wracking Ethiopia. Genocide has become a reality with ten million people now in urgent need of humanitarian assistance. More than 80 percent of those in need of assistance in northern Ethiopia, moreover, are behind the lines of combat. That opens up various opportunities for humanitarian agents.[[12]](#footnote-12) The International Council for Diplomacy and Dialogue listed that women are raped at gunpoint, robbed, and assaulted; there is a lack of medical care, housing, water, and sanitation services; other trends, perhaps too numerous to list, contribute to what has become an ongoing genocide.

In a compellingly insightful article entitled “*If I look at the mass I will never act”: Psychic numbing and genocide,[[13]](#footnote-13)* Slovic (2007) wrote that most people are caring and will exert great effort to rescue individual victims whose needy plight comes to their attention. These same good people, however, often become numbly indifferent to the plight of individuals who are “one of many” in a much greater problem. Of course, every episode of mass murder is unique and raises unique obstacles to intervention. But the repetitiveness of such atrocities, ignored by powerful people and nations, and by the general public as we witnessed in the case of the Amhara plight, calls for explanations that may reflect some fundamental deficiency in our humanity — a deficiency that, once identified, might possibly be overcome. The Fano is vividly aware of this injustice from within and beyond.

*Disinformation, fake news, and grievance politics*

In Ethiopia, concerns over disinformation, fake news, and grievance politics by ethnic-nationalist groups and the regime have intensified in recent years. The disinformation includes mischaracterizing the Fano movement. Policymakers, researchers, and observers worry that these groups team up with notorious Western journalists to spread false narratives and disseminate rumors to shape international opinion and, by extension, government policies. The available evidence suggests that the strategic effects of disinformation are real in the Ethiopian case. Fake news, hate speech, and misinformation is creeping through all social media platforms and regular media outlets. With more and more people relying on social media as a source of news, there are legitimate concerns that such content could influence audiences unable to distinguish truth from fact or news from propaganda.

This “infodemic,” as Dustin Carnahan calls it, puts misleading information front and center —adding fuel to politically contentious fires and escalating social issues to the level of crises. Instead of being places where people stay connected and share the details of their lives, modern media/social media platforms are increasingly being used as sources of information. Some media outlets have been found mischaracterizing the Fano and creating discord among Fano leaders. Some groups of the Ethiopian diaspora have been partly a liability, creating misinformation and fomenting discord among the diverse Fano militia in all the regions. In this grotesque chain of events and travesty of justice, the role played by Fano on the battlefield and beyond has so far been exemplary, and the potential to represent the disfranchised Amhara in the international arena has become more obvious.

**Next Steps**

We should recognize and respect the people who are part of the Fano movement as potentially powerful political, military, and social movement actors, and allocate resources to support, amplify, and extend their impact. Citizens who want to strengthen the Fano can help in many ways.

*Respect and Recognition*: we should start from a place of respect for the movement’s autonomy, opinions, desires, and actual capacity to take part in and lead this powerful political and social movement that can truly transform the situation in Ethiopia, saving Ethiopia and guaranteeing the survival of the Amhara population. In addition, do not dismiss youth and young adults who do engage in prefigurative politics as “unfocused,” “ineffective,” or “idealistic.” Young people considered rash by their elders have often sparked social transformation that was later seen as “inevitable”. It is high time to engage in open dialogue about strategy and tactics and take the Fano opinions seriously.

*Representation*: Challenge *ethnicist* or narrow nationalist representations of people wherever you find them. Lift and share examples of young people in the Amhara region and beyond who do get involved in social, political, and military movements, or even better, help create opportunities for Fano youth activists to share their own experiences with peers and adults alike.

*Real talk:*It is imperative to create open conversations with youth and in particular active members of the Fano movement about systems of power, oppression, resistance, and liberation. Ethno nationalism, Capitalism, Racism, and Patriarchy, as well as Individualism, Competition, and Consumerism, are interlinked systems that deeply impact all young people's lives, in particular the Amhara youth who are subjected to brutal attacks and discrimination.

Some authors[[14]](#footnote-14)argue that*Separating the Amhara Identity from the Fano Militia* for Ethiopia’s harmonious Future. It might sound reasonable, but it is a dangerous recipe at this time in Ethiopian history. The author [Samael](https://medium.com/@sayele_39399?source=post_page-----aacdd3d3febb--------------------------------) (Jan 2024) stated that understanding the distinct origins, nature, and activities of the Fano, and contrasting them with the broader historical and cultural identity of the Amhara people, we can explore pathways to ensure a secure and unified future for Ethiopia. It is crucial, now more than ever, to recognize that the Amhara identity extends far beyond the confines of a militia group and is integral to the fabric of Ethiopian society. This distinction is not just vital for the Amhara people but is a necessary step towards fostering national harmony and stability in a diverse and vibrant Ethiopia. My argument however is to develop and foster a strong Amhara identity and force of power to withstand separatist and anti-Amhara elements. Gradually, a strong multinational force can be established. That requires time, stability, and mutual understanding as well as building trust among the competing ethnic groups. Having read the draft of this paper, my good friend and world-renowned political analyst, responded cautiously “Girma, “To develop and foster a strong Amhara identity” is indeed acceptable. But this must not develop into an Amhara chauvinism or a sense of superiority! Amhara identity must go hand in hand with Ethiopianism. We should never forsake our Ethiopianness in order to demonstrate our Amhara identity - these two institutions must go hand in hands! This duality is indeed what separates us from the ideologues of TPLF and OLF”.

Although there is some skepticism, the perception of the *Fano militia is a necessary bulwark for national defense*, filling gaps left by the central government in protecting communities and maintaining order. This view certainly positions the Fano as patriots and defenders of the nation against various internal and external threats. In line with this, as Dan A. (March 31, 2024)[[15]](#footnote-15) correctly captured solidarity among various ethnic groups is growing, with movements in Afar, Sidama, Gurage, and even some Tigrayan factions showing support for the Amhara cause. This burgeoning alliance underscores a collective determination to end the government’s tyranny. The Fano movement has demonstrated remarkable discipline and strategic acumen, gaining significant ground against government forces. Their approach, characterized by guerrilla tactics and a focus on justice and accountability, has won them broad support not only in the Amhara region but across Ethiopia.

AsKibour Selam (2024)[[16]](#footnote-16)correctly noted that the “cause” of the current conflict is widely shared among the over 60 million people of Amhara. Even if the ruling Prosperity tries to quell the Amhara armed movement with an all-out war, it never wins the war. The marital law and ongoing war on Amhara cannot be a solution. The people are fully aware of the looming existential threat. Better “to die on two feet than live on knees” is the motto of the people who have been fighting foreign invaders.

A recent report by *The Concerned* (2024)[[17]](#footnote-17) posed the question *Can Fano Form a Coalition to Govern the Country once Victory is Achieved?* The answer to this question is affirmative Yes and Fano will build a nationwide partnership to lead the country. Fano possesses the potential to forge a nationwide coalition capable of steering the nation forward. Nevertheless, several preparatory steps are imperative to establish a robust force that operates seamlessly across both military and political spheres. These essential steps are listed below; and I fully agree with the steps.

1. Create a formidable force structured encompassing all parties in all four Amhara Regions, Outside the Region, and Globally.

2. Define clear roles and responsibilities between the political and military wings.

3. Reach out to other opposition parties and popular fronts to form a coalition.

4. Establish a *manifesto* and governing structure to lead the country.

5. Establish the governing structure in regions, zones, and lower level of structure.

6. Stabilize the government – Govern.

All these steps have been extensively discussed in the report. A commendable report!

1. [Fano: A Living Saviour of The Amhara People and The Ethiopian Spirit – Analysis – Eurasia Review](https://www.eurasiareview.com/02022022-fano-a-living-saviour-of-the-amhara-people-and-the-ethiopian-spirit-analysis/) [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. The Fano movement embodies a civil rights struggle that incorporates armed resistance; it is the voice of the voiceless Amhara community. It embodies a powerful political determination deeply rooted in the collective yearning for justice, equality, and freedom of the Amhara people. [The Fano Movement: A Symbol of Courage and Defiance (borkena.com)](https://borkena.com/2023/08/15/ethiopia-fano-movement-a-symbol-of-courage-and-defiance/) [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Historically, the term Fano referred to irregular soldiers who voluntarily participated in military campaigns. The term carries a strong nationalistic connotation, harking back to fighters who defended Ethiopia against during the [Second Italo-Ethiopian War](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Second_Italo-Ethiopian_War) in the 1930s, often overlapping with the [Arbegnoch](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arbegnoch). Although activists popularized the term once again, for peasants, Fano has consistently retained its original meaning: a free peasant fighting to defend their homeland, Ethiopia [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. # <https://borkena.com/2023/08/15/ethiopia-fano-movement-a-symbol-of-courage-and-defiance/>. The Fano Movement: A Symbol of Courage and Defiance. August 15, 2023

   [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. [The Hidden Genocide In Ethiopia – OpEd – Eurasia Review](https://www.eurasiareview.com/26032024-the-hidden-genocide-in-ethiopia-oped/) [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. [Fano: A Living Saviour of The Amhara People And The Ethiopian Spirit – Analysis – Eurasia Review](https://www.eurasiareview.com/02022022-fano-a-living-saviour-of-the-amhara-people-and-the-ethiopian-spirit-analysis/) [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. According to one of my respondents, a former diplomat and military officer “Fanos are not organized bodies. They are groups not centralized but fighting for one cause at different times at different places for different causes related to the threats Ethiopians face at all corners of the nation” (Dec 24 2021). [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. [Molla Melaku: a brave warrior, a tribute to his valour in Fano life and unwavering courage (borkena.com)](https://borkena.com/2023/10/16/molla-melaku-a-brave-warrior-a-tribute-to-his-valor-in-fano-life-and-unwavering-courage/) [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. [The Fanno Breakthrough: Toward Overcoming the Amhara/Ethiopian Existential Crisis (borkena.com)](https://borkena.com/2023/12/09/fanno-breakthrough-toward-overcoming-the-amhara-ethiopian-existential-crisis/) [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. In both Oromia and Amhara, semi-organised networks of youth emerged, centred around each ethnic groups’ longstanding demands and against the repression by the ruling party. These are known as the *Querro* in Oromia and the *Fano* in Amhara. Similar youth activism gradually evolved also beyond Oromia and Amhara. Since 2015, we have seen the development of the same kind of youth movements in many ethnic groups, raising political demands such as enhanced autonomy for their ethnic communities. These among others include networks in the largest ethnic groups in Southern Ethiopia – the *Ejeto* in Sidama, the *Zarma* in Gurage and the *Yelega* in Wolayta (Asnake Kefale, Mohammed Dejen, [Lovise Aalen](https://www.cmi.no/staff/lovise-aalen) (2021). [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. [Fano: A Living Saviour of The Amhara People And The Ethiopian Spirit – Analysis – Eurasia Review](https://www.eurasiareview.com/02022022-fano-a-living-saviour-of-the-amhara-people-and-the-ethiopian-spirit-analysis/) [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. Paul Slovic *Judgment and Decision Making,* Vol. 2, No. 2, April 2007, pp. 79–95. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. https://medium.com/@sayele\_39399/divergent-paths-separating-amhara-identity-from-the-fano-militia-for-ethiopias-harmonious-future-aacdd3d3febb [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. # Ethiopia at cross-roads yet again (By Dan A). March 31, 2024. [Ethiopia at cross-roads yet again (By Dan A) (borkena.com)](https://borkena.com/2024/03/31/ethiopia-at-cross-roads-yet-again-by-dan-a/?fbclid=IwAR0MOOKHp_krYUUlOtrbY48HOf_rBKtT700igzyRvClucouSmwAeVYvS5aI)

    [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. # [A choice made to die on feet than live on knees (borkena.com)](https://borkena.com/2024/03/31/ethiopia-a-choice-made-to-die-on-feet-than-live-on-knees/?fbclid=IwAR0JYqp_rzTstXx7a3UY5_zw7jFdiQ9oFnFnc7FciD8XT3C7a9MnkdKwXXo) A choice made to die on feet than live on knees. March 31, 2024.

    [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. The Resilience of the FANO Movement Historical Perspectives and Next Steps. *The Concerned* February 2024 [↑](#footnote-ref-17)