

ANU PRESS RELEASE

Agaezi National Union (ANU)

Headquarters Office – Geneva

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ANU Expresses Profound Condolences Following the Reported Drone Strike on Holy Arsema Monastery in Western Wollo and Calls for an Independent International Investigation!

The **Agaezi National Union (ANU)** expresses its profound sorrow and deepest condolences following reports that two Orthodox Christian nuns were killed and ten others seriously injured in a reported drone strike on the **Holy Arsema Females' Monastery of Abay Gion** in Western Wollo, Amhara Regional State, Agaezi Habesha Ethiopia on **22 July 2026**.

According to church representatives, eyewitnesses, and local sources, the strike hit the monastery compound while members of the monastic community were preparing food in the monastery's holy kitchen. The explosion reportedly caused extensive destruction to the monastery and left numerous nuns with severe injuries requiring emergency medical treatment.

The two nuns who reportedly lost their lives have been identified as:

- **Emahoy Wolete Mariam**
- **Emahoy Wolete Hana**

ANU extends its heartfelt condolences to their families, the Holy Arsema Monastery, the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church, and all those mourning this tragic loss.



Image from Geez Intelligence Agency (GIA) : Drone strike on the Holy Arsema Females' Monastery of Abay Gion in Western Wollo, Amhara Regional State, Agaezi Habesha Ethiopia on 22 July 2026.

According to local sources, the following ten nuns sustained serious injuries:

- Emahoy Ehte Mariam
- Emahoy Wolete Selassie Kasse
- Emahoy Esete Michael
- Emahoy Wolete Mariam Kachew
- Emahoy Amete Hana Mihret
- Emahoy Wolete Tsadik Gebre Selassie
- Emahoy Wolete Mariam Arsema
- Emahoy Hamere Kidusan
- Emahoy Wolete Mariam Gete
- Emahoy Wolete Selassie Gebre Kidan

Several of the injured were reportedly transferred to Dessie Referral Hospital for specialized treatment after receiving emergency care in Mekane Selam.

According to eyewitness accounts, there was no active armed confrontation or military engagement in the immediate vicinity of the monastery at the time of the incident. Local residents stated that the monastery was conducting its normal religious activities when the explosion occurred.

At the time of this statement, responsibility for the reported strike has **not been independently verified**. While some church representatives and witnesses have alleged that Prosperity Gospel government forces of Abiy Ahmed Ali, a pro-wuhabist party, were responsible, Ethiopian authorities had not publicly commented on the incident at the time of publication. ANU therefore urges that all allegations be investigated through an impartial and credible process consistent with international standards.

ANU recalls that under **International Humanitarian Law**, including the **Geneva Conventions**, civilians and civilian objects—including places of worship, monasteries, churches, hospitals, and schools—are entitled to protection unless and for such time as they are being used for military purposes. Any attack that intentionally or indiscriminately targets civilians or protected civilian objects may constitute a serious violation of international humanitarian law and warrants prompt, impartial, and independent investigation.

Accordingly, ANU calls upon:

1. The Government of Abiy Ahmed Ali Prosperity party to conduct or facilitate a prompt, transparent, and independent investigation into the reported incident.

2. International human rights and humanitarian organizations to document the circumstances surrounding the attack and assess compliance with international humanitarian law.
3. The African Union, the United Nations, and relevant international partners to support impartial fact-finding efforts where appropriate.
4. All parties to the conflict respect their obligations under international humanitarian law by protecting civilians, medical personnel, humanitarian workers, and religious institutions.

ANU further calls for immediate humanitarian assistance for the injured, psychosocial support for the affected monastic community, and continued protection of religious institutions throughout areas affected by armed conflict.

Religious communities and places of worship have historically served as sanctuaries of peace, prayer, learning, and humanitarian service. Their protection is not only a legal obligation under international law but also a moral responsibility shared by all parties to armed conflict.

The Agaezi National Union stands in solidarity with the victims, their families, and all communities affected by violence. ANU reiterates its commitment to the protection of human dignity, freedom of religion, accountability under the rule of law, and the peaceful resolution of conflicts through justice, dialogue, and respect for international humanitarian principles.

The reported strike on the Holy Arsema Females' Monastery underscores the devastating human cost of armed conflict and the urgent need to protect civilians and places of worship. Regardless of the identity of those responsible, any attack that unlawfully harms civilians or damages protected religious institutions must be subject to a prompt, independent, impartial, and transparent investigation consistent with international humanitarian law.

ANU expresses grave concern over reports from recent years alleging damage to churches, monasteries, mosques, and other cultural and religious sites in conflict-affected areas of Ethiopia, including parts of Tigray, Amhara, and Gurage. These reports warrant thorough investigation by competent national and international bodies. Establishing the facts through credible, evidence-based inquiries is essential to ensuring justice for victims and preventing future violations.

The Abiy Ahmed Ali Government of Ethiopia bears the primary responsibility under both domestic and international law to protect civilians, safeguard cultural and religious heritage, investigate alleged violations, and hold those responsible accountable where evidence establishes criminal or other legal responsibility. Fulfilling these obligations is

fundamental to restoring public confidence, protecting the country's diverse historical legacy, and upholding the rule of law.

The ancient churches, monasteries, manuscripts, monuments, and sacred traditions associated with Ethiopia's Geez civilization constitute an irreplaceable part of the cultural heritage of Ethiopia and of humanity. Their preservation should transcend political divisions and remain a shared national and international responsibility. ANU therefore calls for strengthened protection of cultural and religious heritage in accordance with international law, including the **1954 Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict**, and for all parties to respect the sanctity of religious institutions and civilian life.

Justice, accountability, and the preservation of humanity's shared cultural heritage are indispensable foundations for a just and lasting peace.



Issued by:

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