



December 12/13, 2022

The Honorable Antony J. Blinken
Secretary of State
U.S. Department of State 2201 C Street NW
Washington, DC 20520

RE: Civilian killings and displacement of almost a million Oromo nationals in Oromia, Oromo Regional State in Ethiopia

Dear Secretary Blinken:

We, the leaders and members of Matcha Tullema Association, an Oromo self-help association, in the United States, are writing this letter for bringing to the attention of our Secretary of State, the death of thousands of civilian Oromo population, displacement of almost a million people in Oromia. Our members are proud citizens of the United States who feel the pain and suffering of their relatives, who have been killed by the Ethiopian government security forces in Oromia. Tens of thousands of Oromo people have been killed and displaced for their support for the existing federal system in Ethiopia since 1992. Before 1992, for over a century the Oromo were prevented from administering themselves, while their language was banned from being used for teaching, preaching and publishing in Ethiopia. It was only with the establishment of nine regional states, including Oromia, that for the first time since their conquest and incorporation into the Ethiopian empire during the 1880s that the Oromo started administering themselves and teaching their primary school children in their language.

Since the Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed came to power in April 2018, he has been slowly but surely dismantling the existing federal system in Ethiopia and replacing it with his own dictatorship. When the Oromo started opposing the dismantling of federal system, Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed declared war in several regions of Oromia. It is in Oromia, that Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed has faced strong peaceful opposition to his dictatorial ambition. Oromia is the largest, the richest and the most densely populated regional state in Ethiopia. The Oromo constitute around forty-five percent of Ethiopia's estimated of 115 million populations. Because the Oromo constitute the single largest national group and their strong support for the federal system in Ethiopia, they are viewed as the greatest threat to Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed's wild ambition for his dictatorial rule. That is why:

- Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed has imposed illegal **command posts** (military dictatorship) in most zones of Oromia in the past three years, which led to the displacement of **close to one million farmers and residents of urban centers in the war torn regions of Wallaga, Shawa and Gujii zones in Oromia.**

- In the past three years, tens of thousands of unarmed civilians have been killed in Oromia by Abiy Ahmed's military and security forces.
- In the past few months, over five hundred drone attacks have been carried out in Oromia, where men & women, who were praying in churches, children in schools and even a 3 months baby, were killed by drone attacks.
- Over hundred fifty thousand houses of Oromo farmers and cattle keepers have been burned to the ground by the Ethiopian government security forces in Wallaga, Shawa and Gujji zones of Oromia.
- Under command posts, security forces killed people and left them in the forests to be food for wild animals. Denying victims decent burial is a crime against humanity.
- In the past three years, Ethiopian security forces burned alive close to a hundred individuals with their houses in several regions of Oromia. The relatives of those victims had to bury their ashes, which outraged the Oromo population and other Ethiopians.
- During the second week of December 2022, Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed's Amhara militias, executed a number of individuals in Oromia region of Wallaga, cut their heads, hang them on sticks, the killers then took their photos and posted them on their face book pages.
- Again during the second week of December 2022, Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed's Amhara militia members skinned while they were alive, a number of Oromo nationals in Wallaga. Those militia members took their photos with the skinned victims and posted on their face book pages. The victim's corpses were left unburied to be food for wild animals.

Dear Secretary Blinken:

In the land of their birth, the Oromo, who constitute the single largest national group in Ethiopia and the third largest national group in Africa, are denied the most basic democratic right to organize freely and legally and express their political opinion. We do not know any country in the world; except Ethiopia, where the single largest national group is denied the right to have a single independent newspaper, a single independent radio and television programs. The Oromo do not have the right to elect their own leaders and support an organization of their choice. More than 1,000 Oromo political leaders have been in detention since 2020. Today, it is a serious crime, to support an independent Oromo organization, such as the Oromo Liberation Front (OLF). Supporters of the OLF and other independent organizations are harassed, detained for years without charge and their property confiscated without due process.

Dear Secretary Blinken:

In the light of what has been stated above, which is a tip of an iceberg, we request you to take the following practical measures which may reduce the current suffering in Oromia.

- We request that the U.S. Department of State, under your capable leadership, set an example by acting directly to use its enormous influence to apply political, economic and diplomatic pressures upon the Ethiopian government to 1) stop its fighter jet and

helicopter gunships and drone bombardments against civilian population in the regions of Wallaga, Shawa and Gujji zones in Oromia.

- Please urge Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed, to stop waging war against civilian population and assist those who have been displaced to return to their villages, as soon as possible.
- **Please urge Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed, to assist the over hundred fifty thousand Oromo nationals, whose houses have been burned to the ground by the Ethiopian government security forces**
- We humbly request you to exert your energy and diplomatic skills for urging Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed to respect the Federal Constitution of 1995 and stop dismantling the existing federal arrangements in Ethiopia.
- Finally, we earnestly believe that as America's top diplomat and principal voice on international issues, you have an extraordinary opportunity for alleviating the incredible human suffering in Oromia and Tigray regions.

We thank you for your interest in the wellbeing of the Oromo and other people of Ethiopia.

Sincerely,
MachaTulama Association USA (MT USA)