

Appeal of Oromo Student's Union (OSU) to International Community

February 10, 2016, Finfinne (Addis Ababa), Ethiopia

To:

- ✓ Multinational organizations (UN, EU, AU, and others)
- ✓ Countries supporting the Ethiopian regime in the name of development, peace and security, education, science and technology (USA, European countries, Canada, Australia, and others)
- ✓ Human rights organizations (Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International, Human Rights League of the Horn of Africa, and others)
- ✓ Oromo political organizations
- ✓ Oromo studies Association (OSA)
- ✓ Oromo community organizations all over the world and all other concerned bodies

We members of Oromo Student's Union (OSU) appeal to the international community that we are currently living under difficult conditions. It is evident that the Ethiopian regime is committing genocidal crime on the Oromo people in general and the Oromo students in particular by deploying its military and police force and terrorizing us for peacefully protesting demanding our rights asking the legitimate and rightful questions of our people. Our questions are the questions of our people. Our demands are the demands of our people. Our demands can be divided into two major categories:

1. **Basic human rights must be respected.** While the Oromo constitute the majority of the Ethiopian population, Oromia constitute the largest territory, and the region is the economic backbone of Ethiopia, the Oromo people have been marginalized in every arena. Over the past 24 years the Oromo people do not have proportional power and economic share in the country and have been ruled under the EPRDF which in essence is maneuvered and completely controlled by the TPLF party. Since the mass base of the TPLF/EPRDF is the minority Tigrean population, it has been in constant conflict with the Oromo people in Oromia. The Oromo people are ruled under the barrel of the gun being constantly killed, arrested, tortured, students dismissed from schools, civilians kidnapped and disappeared, are forced to leave their country and become refugees in several countries around the globe. Therefore we demand that the basic human and democratic rights of the Oromo people be respected and a system based on equality, justice, democracy, and a government based on the needs of our people be established.
2. **Master Plan must be stopped.** Starting from 2014 we protested against the so called Master Plan of the TPLF/EPRDF regime, a plan which incorporates several Oromian towns into the capital Finfinne (Addis Ababa), evicts Oromo farmers from their ancestral land, eradicates Oromo culture, language and identity, planned to sell Oromo land and plunder Oromia's natural resources, divide the map of Oromia into two, and causes pollution and environmental degradation. We presented our appeal in writing several times requesting that the Master plan be stopped. Instead of answering our request to stop the Master plan, the regime

announced another plan to incorporate major Oromian towns which is another plan to incorporate the entire of Oromia under the jurisdiction of the federal government which on the other hand is controlled by the TPLF. When our requests fell into deaf ears we protested peacefully. The answer to our peaceful protest has been brutal killings, beatings, mass arrests, kidnappings and disappearances, inhuman torture by the regime's so called Agazi troops. In addition to some 80+ people who were killed in 2014, more than 200 peaceful citizens, mostly students have been killed since November 2015. Thousands others have been wounded. Countless others have been jailed and are under severe torture.

In order to shed light to the basis our appeal to international community hereby we enumerate the atrocities committed by the Ethiopian government in a declaration of genocidal war on the Oromo people and to explain the current objective situation in Oromia.

- 1. Over 200 people, including a 7 year old child and a 70 year old man killed and thousands others wounded.** As the rightful question of the people continued in all areas, big and small towns and including small villages, universities and higher educational institutions, elementary, middle and high schools, the government fired live bullet on peaceful protesters, mainly students and killed over 200 people including a 7 year old child and a 70 year old man. The manner in which these innocent Oromo civilians were killed is extremely brutal and rarely witnessed in other parts of the world. Several people, including a pregnant woman in Kombolcha, Horo Guduru zone, were killed and their bodies have been thrown into jungles, a usual practice of the regime hiding the killings. The bodies of several others have been eaten by wild animals and the remains have been discovered. A mother who was crying to save her young child was brutally shot and killed in Chanka in Qellem Wollega zone. Her child is also not saved. Thousands others have been injured and left without medical attention. In some cases they are even prevented from going to the nearby medical centers and hospitals. Many sustained amputated limbs, others blinded.
- 2. Open declaration of war on the Oromo people over the media:** The government is using its media outlets and beating a declaration of war on the Oromo people. Peaceful Oromo students who do not have anything on their hands other than their pens and pencils are labeled as "terrorists". The government's communication minister Mr. Getachew Reda went on a national TV and labeled the protesters as "demons" and terrorists and ordered the forces of the regime to take all necessary actions. Prime Minister Hailemariam Dessalegn stated on the national TV that his government will take "merciless action" on the protesters, again labeling them as "terrorists".
- 3. We reject the fake declaration of OPDO.** When the government could not stop the popular resistance it ordered its subordinate organization so called "Oromo People's Democratic Organization (OPDO)" to declare that the so called Master Plan has been scrapped. We the Oromo people are used to such kind of trick used by the regime to pacify the protest and buy time. First of all we know that the so called OPDO has no power at all. Second, the Master Plan was prepared by the TPLF clicks and not by the OPDO. Third, it is not the jurisdiction of the OPDO (the party) who has the authority to annul a plan which is declared as a law by the federal

government. While the OPDO is talking about scrapping the Master Plan, the government forces are killing protesters who came out peacefully in opposition to the same Master Plan.

4. **We appreciate the resolution of European Union (EU).** After two months of continued protest and after the brutality of the regime has gone beyond limits and hundreds have been killed, we are grateful that the international community now started to respond. In light of this we members of the Oromo Student's Union (OSU) appreciate the resolution passed by the European Union (EU) strongly denouncing the atrocities of the TPLF/EPRDF regime. Moreover, we appreciate the reports of human rights organizations such as Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, and Human Rights League of the Horn of Africa for exposing the brutal killings and mass incarcerations of the regime. We call on the US and other western governments to put pressure on the regime by strongly condemning the regime.
5. **All Schools in Oromia turned into military garrisons.** Today nearly all elementary, middle, and high schools in Oromia are closed. In those schools which are functioning, they are surrounded by the Agazi forces. All universities and colleges in Jimma, Wollega, Ambo, Walliso, Walqixxe, Adama, Haromaya, Madda Walabu, Bule Hora, Asala, Mattu, and several other cities have been military garrisons of the regime. The Agazi forces of the regime permanently reside inside the campus and terrorize the students day-in, day-out. They live there and eat in the cafeteria with the students. They break the student dormitories beat them severely. Many incidents of rape in the dormitories of the girls have been repeatedly in Ambo and in Jimma.
6. **An estimated half a million people arrested and are under severe torture.** The number of Oromo nationals who have been incarcerated in mass is staggering. While it is hard to obtain the exact figure of those arrested, based on the reports we received from several parts of Oromia we roughly estimate the number to about half a million. In almost all places prison houses are crowded. In many areas people are kept in a fence in the open air just like cattle. Since there is no place to arrest people, they usually round them up and beat them brutally and undergo several other forms of ill treatment and torture.

Therefore, based on the above and many other foundations, we members of the Oromo Student's Union (OSU) present the following appeal to the international community.

1. **The TPLF/EPRDF regime should be brought to the International Criminal Court (ICC).** The TPLF/EPRDF government has killed hundreds of Oromo civilians. We have ample evidence that in the two major Oromo protests of May 2014 and the current protests in Oromia alone more than 380 Oromo lives have been taken by this regime. This number does not include the number of Oromos killed on several other locations and in other parts of the country such as Ogadenia, Gambella, Sidama, and many others. We request that the regime be brought to International Criminal Court (ICC). We also demand that the necessary compensation be paid for those who sustained bodily injury and became disabled by the brutal attack of the regime.
2. **All Oromo nationals incarcerated in mass must be released unconditionally.** We demand that all Oromo nationals arrested in mass for committing no crime other than asking questions using their rights and peacefully protesting be released unconditionally. We ask the international community put the necessary pressure on the regime for the release of all political prisoners,

especially those who have been incarcerated in mass for protesting against the Master Plan which the regime itself admitted that the demands of the protesters was legitimate.

3. **A Transitional Government must be established in Ethiopia.** We believe that a government which publicly declare war on its citizens and indiscriminately kills civilians who are asking their legitimate grievances and a government which is condemned widely by its people cannot represent that people. If this government stays in power any longer it will create a disaster and damage on the people: more lives will be lost, more property and resources will be damaged, retardation in the development of science and technology, and worsening of the regional peace and security. Therefore, we demand that a Transitional Government should be formed and a foundation for a new democratic government be laid down.
4. **A serious and meaningful economic and diplomatic pressure must be imposed on the TPLF/EPRDF government.** We request that any aid given to this government be contingent on respect of the respect of human rights. We also demand that any economic, military, security, and other bilateral relations that are made between the TPLF/EPRDF regime be stopped until the government stop killing its citizens and until all prisoners have been released. Overall, we request that the international community at impose a meaningful pressure on the regime.
5. **Oromo political, civic, and professional organizations all over the world should unite and join our struggle.** We request that all Oromo political organizations, community organizations all over the globe, Oromo Studies Association (OSA), Oromo professional associations, Oromo mass organizations, etc to narrow their differences, get united, and make their focus on the dictatorial TPLF/EPRDF regime and intensify their struggle for justice, democracy, and freedom of their people who are getting killed, incarcerated, and tortured by the day.
6. **The TPLF/EPRDF government must be held responsible for the closure of 80% of schools and universities in Oromia.** Currently all universities and other higher educational institutions in Oromia are under siege and the teaching-learning process has been hampered or interrupted. 70% of the students of higher educational institutions in Oromia have gone to their families because they are scared to stay in such a tense atmosphere. 80% of elementary, middle, and high schools in Oromia are closed because their families are scared to send their children to school only for them to get killed, wounded and become disabled, or thrown into jail and undergo a severe torture. We reiterate that the TPLF/EPRDF government will be solely responsible for closure of all schools in Oromia while schools in other regions of the country are operating regularly.
7. **Sanctions must be imposed on the TPLF/EPRDF regime for denying the Oromo and other peoples of the country freedom of speech and peaceful protest.** We demand that the international community put the necessary economic and political sanction on the Ethiopian regime for the denying the people of the country in general and the Oromo people in particular the right to freely speak their mind by criticizing the policies of the regime and protesting peacefully.

In conclusion, we appeal to the international community: multinational organizations (UN, EU, AU, and others), countries supporting the Ethiopian regime in the name of development, peace and security, education, science and technology (USA, European countries, Canada, Australia, and others), human rights organizations (Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International, Human Rights

League of the Horn of Africa, and others), Oromo political organizations, Oromo studies Association (OSA), Oromo community organizations all over the world and all other concerned bodies to stand with our struggle for survival put the necessary pressure on the Ethiopian regime.

Victory to the Oromo People!
Oromo Student's Union (OSU)

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