



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

05/11/2021

EHRC REPORT MUST SPUR FURTHER ACTION FOR OROMO DETAINEES

Falls Church, Virginia—OLLAA welcomes the recent [report](#) by the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission (EHRC), which, at long last, documents the grave human rights violations of Oromo detainees held in detention centers across the Oromia region.

On May 06, the EHRC published the findings of its nearly two-month investigation into over 21 police stations across Oromia, documenting their treatment of detainees, prison conditions, and their preservation of rule of law. Following this inquiry, the EHRC found the following:

- Indefinite or arbitrary detention, including imprisonment without charge or trial.
- Severe mistreatment and abuse by police, including beatings and other violence.
- Inadequate food, water, and sanitation.
- Denial of medical care to detainees with wounds, deteriorating illness, or disability.
- Imprisonment of children as young as 9 years old, held in detention alongside adults.
- Extortion, revenge arrests, and harassment of detainees' family members.
- A complete breakdown in the rule of law and due process.

The majority of detainees interviewed in the report were wrongfully arrested in the wake of Hachaaluu Hundessa's murder and the brutal government [crackdown](#) that followed. The prison conditions documented by the EHRC represent serious violations of international law as well as the Ethiopian [Constitution](#) of 1994, which guarantees the rights to life and freedom from cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment.

While OLLAA is relieved that the EHRC has begun to document the [political persecution](#) perpetrated against the Oromo people, we emphasize that this report alone is not enough.

For over a year, thousands of Oromo citizens have languished in prisons across the region, suffering torture, rape, and even extrajudicial murder. The EHRC's report fails to capture the worst of these governmental abuses and only presents a partial view of what Oromo prisoners endure.

In addition to the above abuses, OLLAA urges the EHRC to continue to broaden their investigation to other parts of Oromia, where thousands more prisoners are also detained in abhorrent conditions. Additionally, OLLAA demands that the EHRC immediately address the killings and enforced disappearances of Oromo prisoners.

Most recently, the February 14 arrest and imprisonment of [Mohammed Deksiso](#), an Oromo youth arrested at his university graduation, has left the community mourning the loss of yet another young leader.



Oromo Legacy Leadership and Advocacy Association

PRESS RELEASE

CONTACT US: info@ollaa.org

In February, Mohammed was wrongfully detained by Oromia police, who then defied a judge's order demanding his release. When authorities finally agreed to free the young man, Mohammed was abducted from the police station parking lot by a speeding van—reportedly with government plates. Mohammed has not been heard from since, and his family fears he has joined the long list of those “disappeared” by the Ethiopian government.

While the EHRC report marks an essential first step toward adequate reporting on Ethiopia's forgotten prisoners, this must only be the beginning. Both the EHRC and government must follow through and investigate deeper to ensure justice and human rights for all Ethiopians—in Oromia and beyond.

OLLAA is an umbrella organization that represents dozens of Oromo communities around the world.