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OLLAA CONDEMNS DEADLY ATTACK ON ETHIOPIAN-OROMO WOMAN IN SOMALILAND

Falls Church, Virginia (01/11/2024) – OLLAA strongly condemns the recent attacks on Ethiopian-Oromo women in Somaliland, following the protests against the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the Governments of Ethiopia and Somaliland.

Alishoo Habiib, chairman for East and Central Africa refugees, who spoke with [BBC Afaan Oromo yesterday](#), shared that tension escalated following the warm initial reception by Somaliland residents. Those who initially celebrated the news began protesting, driven by the narrative that the agreement suggested Ethiopia's intention to colonize Somaliland.

The unrest reached its height on the third day of protests in Buroottii city, with initial support turning to condemnation in the afternoon. This shift led to targeted attacks on areas predominantly inhabited by Oromo people, causing harm to individuals and the looting of their property. The government is cognizant of the situation, and local police were present during the interview. In a separate incident, the following protesters in the city of Boramaa, targeted Oromo businesses and houses, boldly injuring a 70-year-old man and a 5-year-old baby.

Social media has further intensified [anti-Oromo rhetoric](#), urging locals to attack Ethiopian refugees residing in their towns, and labeling them as spies for the Ethiopian government. On January 10th, [numerous videos surfaced](#) that called for Somalis to take holdy war against Ethiopia. Another video shared the same day shows the Somalia Interior Minister [saying the Ethiopian Orthodox Church had appointed a priest to Somaliland](#), calling for urgent action.

OLLAA calls on Somalis to recognize that the signed agreement by the Ethiopian government does not represent the interests of refugees or aspirations of impoverished migrants seeking better opportunities in Somaliland. In 2023 alone, over 100,000 Somalis sought safety in Ethiopia due to conflicts with Al-Shabab. According to international law, all refugees have the right to be protected in the country they are in. We also emphasize that the bond between Oromo and Somali transcends artificial borders.

OLLAA condemns these attacks and all assaults against Ethiopian civilians in Somalia or Somaliland. Under international law, it is the duty of the Somaliland/Somalia government to protect civilians, including refugees. OLLAA calls on the UNHRC and IOM offices in Somaliland and Somalia to provide necessary protection to vulnerable communities. The international community is implored to mediate and de-escalate the situation in the region.

OLLAA is an umbrella organization that works in collaboration with dozens of Oromo communities around the world.

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