



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**OLLAA CALLS FOR THE RELEASE OF ALL POLITICAL PRISONERS AS DETAINED LEADERS OF THE OLF LEAD A HUNGER STRIKE**

*Falls Church, Virginia (02/11/2022)* – On February 10, 2022, the OLF released a [statement](#) regarding the continued detention of its senior leaders, including Mikael Boren, Kenessa Ayana, Dawit Abdeta, Lemi Begna, Geda Gabisa, and Bate Urgessa, who recently launched a hunger strike in order to protest their unlawful detention and denial of due process rights. In particular, they are [concerned](#) that two OLF leaders, Gemechu Ayaana and Abdii Raggaasaa, remain detained despite multiple court orders for their release. They also are protesting the detention conditions at various locations throughout Oromia, where they report that jailors are actively denying detainees access to food, water, and other basic necessities; complaints that detainees have been [denied](#) the opportunity to see their families; and that several detained OLF members have been forcibly disappeared.

OLLAA notes that, under international human rights law, the right to liberty protects citizens from arbitrary arrest and detentions. All persons deprived of their liberty have the right to challenge the lawfulness of their detention before a court of law and the [right](#) to be treated with humanity and with respect for the inherent dignity of the human person, which includes access to food, water, and other necessities and right of access to families and legal counsel.

OLLAA reiterates its call for the release of all political prisoners in Ethiopia, including those members of the OLF who are detained. We firmly believe that lasting peace cannot be achieved while the government of Ethiopia continues to suppress the voices of political opponents. We have long called for the establishment of an independent and inclusive dialogue that includes the voices of all major ethnic and political groups in order to chart a democratic path forward for the country. Such a dialogue cannot be formed while political leaders remain unlawfully detained. We also call for all relevant bodies to launch investigations into these allegations of human rights abuses being perpetrated against detainees, and to continue to pressure the government of Ethiopia to release all political prisoners. On Monday, February 14th, OLLAA will be launching a letter writing campaign to US Members of Congress calling for them to ensure the release of these political prisoners, alongside all other political prisoners in Ethiopia.

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