



OLLAA'S COMMENTS ON US VISIT TO ETHIOPIA

Falls Church, Virginia (3/20/2023) – This past week, US Secretary of State Antony Blinken visited Ethiopia. During his visit, he met with multiple officials and members of [civil society](#), including [Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed](#), the [Minister of Finance](#), the [signatories](#) of the Pretoria peace agreement, and Ethiopia's [Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs](#). Throughout his visit, Secretary Blinken largely focused on the need to fully implement the Cessation of Hostilities agreement between the TPLF and the Ethiopian government and the need for inclusive transitional justice processes in Ethiopia. He also [announced](#) that the US government would be providing an additional \$331 million in humanitarian assistance to Ethiopia in order to to “provide life-saving support to those displaced and affected by conflict, drought, and food insecurity.” Finally, the US State Department issued a [fact sheet](#) during his visit which noted their plans to put \$1.975 million towards supporting “independent investigations of human rights atrocities and justice and accountability processes for alleged atrocities committed by all sides in Ethiopia.”

As noted by OLLAA's Executive Director, Seena Jimjimo:

“This visit by Secretary Blinken to Ethiopia represents yet another failure by the US government to properly address the situation in Oromia and to condemn human rights violations against Oromo civilians. A week before his visit, several Oromo civilians were killed in the Guji zone by regional security forces while federal forces continued their campaign against the OLA in central and western Oromia, leading to countless violations of ordinary civilians' human rights. More importantly, it is appalling that the US government would choose this moment to discuss transitional justice as war still rages on throughout Oromia. Secretary Blinken and the US government failed to use this visit as an opportunity to press for a negotiated peace agreement between the Ethiopian government and the OLA before transitional justice measures are adopted.”

While OLLAA has long criticized the US government for its failure to acknowledge and condemn human rights violations inside the Oromia region, we note that Secretary Blinken did call some attention to the situation in Oromia during his visit. During his meeting with PM Abiy, Secretary Blinken reportedly “expressed concerns about the situation in Oromia and the need for a resolution through dialogue.” During his [Press Briefing](#), while discussing the need to implement an inclusive and comprehensive transitional justice process, he noted that “Overcoming poisonous grievances and ethnic divisions is the only way to break the cycle of political and ethnic violence in the north, in Oromia, or anywhere else.” While we recognize this is progress on behalf of the US government, we were gravely disappointed to see that Secretary Blinken did not take this opportunity to explicitly condemn violence in Oromia, including the recent attacks in Guji by regional security forces and the ongoing military campaign against the OLA in central and western Oromia. We, therefore, call on the



US government to condemn credible allegations of human rights violations against Oromo civilians throughout the country.

Throughout the course of his visit to Ethiopia, Secretary Blinken continued to call on the Ethiopian government to adopt a comprehensive and inclusive transitional justice process and [expressed](#) his support for the national transitional justice process currently being developed by the Ethiopian government. OLLAA is concerned about the US government's decision to provide whole-hearted support for the process at this time. As we noted in our recent [comments](#) to the Ethiopian government, there is a need to achieve a peaceful resolution to the conflict throughout the country prior to the adoption of transitional justice measures, including the conflict in the Oromia region. OLLAA calls on the US government to pressure the Ethiopian government to find a peaceful resolution to the conflict in Oromia, as it has recently done with the TPLF in northern Ethiopia.

Finally, while OLLAA takes note of the pledge by Secretary Blinken to provide \$331 million in humanitarian assistance to Ethiopia in order to to "provide life-saving support to those displaced and affected by conflict, drought, and food insecurity," we remain concerned that this life-saving assistance will not reach those individual most in need throughout Oromia. As recently reported by [UN OCHA](#), of the 6.85 million livestock that have died due to drought in Ethiopia since 2021, 4.64 million were from the Oromia region, highlighting just how dire the level of need in Oromia is. The UN has also consistently [reported](#) that there is a lack of access for the delivery of humanitarian assistance throughout many parts of Oromia due to insecurity. We call on the US government to do more to raise awareness of the dire humanitarian situation in Oromia and to ensure that the recently-pledged \$331m reaches those civilians most in need throughout the Oromia region.

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