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**OLLAA URGES US SENATE TO ADVANCE BILL ON HUMAN RIGHTS IN ETHIOPIA**

*Falls Church, Virginia (03/29/2022)* – In November 2021, Senator Menendez introduced S.3199, the Ethiopia Peace and Democracy Promotion Act of 2021, in the Senate. OLLAA has worked with the Senate from the beginning to ensure that any such bill takes into account the human rights and humanitarian situation throughout Ethiopia, and particularly for the Oromo. Although the bill that was initially introduced called for the US to take concrete steps to address the conflict in Tigray and other northern regions of Ethiopia, it did not fully take into account the similar human rights abuses that have been perpetrated against other ethnic groups throughout Ethiopia. Since the bill was introduced, OLLAA, alongside other advocacy groups, has engaged with members of the Senate on the text, which has come a long way from the original version and now takes into account the human rights and humanitarian situation throughout the country.

Today, the US Senate Committee on Foreign Relations will mark up the amended text of S.3199.

While we still believe that this bill could be further strengthened by explicitly laying out the human rights abuses that have been committed against the Oromo since 2018 and calling for justice, OLLAA supports this bill, which will:

1. Provide leverage to the administration to bring the affected parties together in diplomatic negotiations to end the conflict(s) in the country by imposing consequences for failure to negotiate.
2. Address the humanitarian issues plaguing the country. In particular, the blockade in Tigray continues to cause suffering in the region and needs immediate attention. This bill could also be used to end the crisis in the Oromo region.
3. Call for accountability for war crimes, crimes against humanity and accountability for human rights abuses more widely.
4. Call for a plan to support peace in the country as it takes a holistic look at the needs of the country as a whole.

OLLAA urges all members of the Committee on Foreign Relations to support Senator Menendez's substitute amendment to S.3199. We also call on all members of the Senate to ensure the passage of this bill once it has advanced to the floor. We believe that the decision to oppose this bill will be

seen by the Ethiopian government as a signal that it can continue perpetrating human rights abuses throughout the country with impunity.

OLLAA must also note our disappointment at the disinformation that has been spread about S.3199 by multiple parties, including by an Ethiopian state-owned television [channel](#), which aired a segment claiming that the bill imposes sanctions on finance and investments, prevents remittance and diaspora investment in Ethiopia, and restricts travel for members of Ethiopian diaspora communities. We note that these claims are patently false, and that the bill only targets those individuals who are determined to have been involved in the conflict. OLLAA also notes that the fact that the regime has decided to propagate such false information clearly demonstrates their concerns about individuals being targeted by sanctions and their desire to avoid accountability for abuses and atrocities.

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