



OLLAA ALARMED BY DISTURBING RHETORIC FROM AMHARA COMMUNITY

Falls Church, Virginia (4/12/2023) – In recent weeks, OLLAA has grown increasingly concerned by the increase of harmful rhetoric from members of the Amhara community—including the Amhara diaspora community and individuals and officials in Ethiopia—regarding Oromos, and which appears to be designed to incite violence and hatred against the Oromo community. For example, during the Grand Amhara Convention which was held in Washington, D.C. from March 26-26th, one [panelist](#) referred to Oromos as *Galla*, a derogatory term used for the Oromo people. Countless [social media](#) posts have been made in the weeks following the convention that refer to Oromos by derogatory terms. [Doctored images](#) have been posted online purporting to show Ethiopian federal officials wearing a *kallacha*—headgear worn by Aba Gadas, who are leaders of the traditional Oromo Gada political system—in order to claim that these leaders are secretly aligned with Oromos. Amahra [protesters](#) have also used derogatory terms for Oromo in recent days.

Much of this rhetoric appears to be linked to the recent escalation of tensions between the Amhara regional government and the Ethiopian federal government, which is led by Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed, who is of Oromo descent. These tensions appear to have been initially related to the [removal](#) of the TPLF from Ethiopia’s list of designated terrorist organizations and appear to have reached a boiling point after the Ethiopian federal government announced its [decision](#) to dismantle regional special forces throughout the country. Since that time, there have been growing [calls](#) from Amhara media sites for the Prime Minister to resign. Amhara civilians have also launched several protests against this decision, which they have [claimed](#) is a “ploy to weaken the Amhara people.” Other Amhara activists have [claimed](#) that the decision to disarm the special forces is part of a government plan to return parts of western and southern Tigray that are currently occupied by Amhara regional forces to Tigray, and others have [issued](#) calls for war.

OLLAA is gravely concerned about the escalation of hateful language against the Oromos by members of the Amhara community in recent weeks, much of which appears to be pushing a false narrative that the Prime Minister and the Ethiopian federal government are aligned with—or otherwise favor—the Oromo community. Not only does such a narrative not provide an accurate portrayal of the human rights abuses experienced by the Oromo at the hands of the Ethiopian government, but it also is leading to reports of attacks against Oromo civilians throughout the country. Recent [reporting](#) by OMN indicates that Amhara regional forces launched an attack on residents of Jilee Dhumuga district, in the Wollo Oromia Special zone on April 10, leading to the death of five Oromo civilians. It has also been [reported](#) that Oromo students at the Debre Tabor University in the Amhara region were attacked and beaten by Amhara students who were protesting against the decision to disarm the Amhara special forces.

OLLAA is concerned that these reports of violence may only escalate in the coming weeks. As noted by OLLAA’s Executive Director, Seena Jimjimo:



“Historically, Amhara elites have utilized state and private media to disseminate misleading and anti-Oromo sentiment, as we have seen with the labeling of the current ruling party as an Orommuma government. Instead, the current ruling party has conducted numerous concerted attacks on Oromo civilians since coming to power. Indeed, Amhara elites, the Amhara regional government, and Amhara forces all stood with the federal government to commit unspeakable atrocities against Oromo civilians. Today, almost three years since celebrated Oromo singer Hachalu Hundessa was assassinated and hundreds of Oromo civilians were killed, they continue to vilify the Oromo and Oromo identity. Since 2019, Oromo students in the Amhara region have been systematically targeted in what appears to be an attempt to start interethnic violence between Oromo. Unfortunately, it appears this group of Amhara extremists are painting a picture of victimhood to the international community while perpetuating violence in Ethiopia.”

As such, OLLAA calls for the Amhara community to refrain from utilizing language that incites violence or hatred of the Oromo as part of their campaign against the Ethiopian federal government’s policies. We express our deep concern that such language will lead to further acts of violence against and dehumanization of the Oromo people. OLLAA calls on the Ethiopian government to take active measures to ensure the safety of the Oromo population and to condemn rhetoric that fuels inter-communal tensions and violence. Finally, we call on the international community to condemn this hateful rhetoric and to take concrete steps to promote lasting peace and inter-communal dialogue and understanding across Ethiopia.

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