



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**US SENATOR MERKLEY WRITES TO STATE DEPARTMENT REGARDING THE
HUMAN RIGHTS OF THE OROMO**

Falls Church, Virginia (07/08/2022) – On July 7, 2022, U.S. Senator Jeff Merkley issued a [press release](#) raising concerns about the human rights situation for the Oromo in Ethiopia, and publishing the text of a letter he sent to Ambassador Molly Phee, the Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs at the U.S. Department of State. In this letter, he calls on the State Department to do more to address the series of human rights abuses that have been perpetrated against Oromos since Prime Minister Abiy’s rise to power in 2018 and that continue to this day, including the recent targeting of Oromo civilians in Gambella city, as well as on the need for accountability for human rights violations. He also asked the Department of State to strengthen their calls for the Ethiopian government to peacefully resolve conflicts throughout the country, and for U.S. Embassy staff to travel to “conflict-affected parts of Oromia to see the situation for themselves and speak to those affected.”

OLLAA would like to thank Senator Merkley for his strong statement in support of human rights throughout Ethiopia, particularly for the Oromo, alongside his calls for the US State Department to take stronger measures to ensure accountability for human rights violations. We also thank the Oregon Oromo Community for their continued engagement and unwavering commitment to raising awareness to the human rights situation facing the Oromo. We hope that other concerned actors, including members of the US Congress and other officials, will follow his lead, and issue similar public statements regarding the human rights situation for Oromos and throughout Ethiopia, alongside calls for the Ethiopian government to peacefully resolve conflicts throughout the country. We remain concerned at the continued failure of the international community, members of the media, and the US government to respond to reports of attacks against Oromos and members of other ethnic groups. We believe that all such acts of violence against Ethiopian civilians should be condemned and investigated, and are concerned at the international community’s selective focus when it comes to human rights abuses in Ethiopia, which feeds into an atmosphere of polarization and division in the country.

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