



## OROMO COMMUNITY MEETS WITH U.S. SPECIAL ENVOY

*Falls Church, Virginia (7/20/2023)* -- On July 20, 2023, representatives from OLLAA and U.S.-Oromo communities met with Ambassador Mike Hammer, U.S. Special Envoy for the Horn of Africa. During this meeting, representatives expressed disappointment at the recent decision by the United States government to [rescind aid restrictions](#) placed on the government of Ethiopia based on its engagement in a pattern of gross violations of human rights. While recognizing the significance of the [peace agreement](#) that formally ended the war in northern Ethiopia, the representatives nonetheless stressed that abuses continue throughout the country, [especially in Oromia](#). Representatives expressed their gratitude for Ambassador Hammer's attention to the human rights situation in Ethiopia and their hope for continued engagement on the issue.

In particular, community representatives raised the issue of Oromia's role in transitional justice with Ambassador Hammer. As the country's largest ethnic group, the Oromos' participation in any inclusive dialogue is necessary for its success, yet many are concerned that the decision to lift restrictions on the Ethiopian government may undermine such participation. Ambassador Hammer clarified that the decision to lift restrictions was based on various factors, including input from various local and international sources indicating a decline in human rights violations at the hands of the Ethiopian government following the Cessation of Hostilities Agreement in northern Ethiopia and the need for additional tools to push for continued improvements on human rights and future peace talks.

Oromo community leaders also asked Ambassador Hammer about the stalled peace talks between the OLA and the Ethiopian government and emphasized the diaspora's desire to assist the U.S., including in the peace process. Ambassador Hammer appreciated the question and stressed the value diaspora communities add by advocating for change and providing their unique perspective to the U.S. government, and encouraged more discussions between different ethnic groups in the diaspora.

Finally, Ambassador Hammer reaffirmed his commitment to keeping Ethiopia in the public eye, acknowledging that the Cessation of Hostilities Agreement must be viewed as a starting point, rather than an end, to peace in Ethiopia. OLLAA and the Oromo community leaders thank Ambassador Hammer for his time and his assurances regarding the importance of peace in Ethiopia.

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