



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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EHRC REVEALS VIOLATIONS OF OROMO PRISONERS' RIGHTS

Falls Church, Virginia (08/02/2022) – On August 1, 2022, the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission (EHRC) [presented](#) findings from their monitoring of 126 police stations and 27 prisons across Oromia, where thousands of Oromos remain detained. The EHRC reported that the prisons were overcrowded, unsanitary, and did not provide access to adequate medical services. They also reported on a pattern of rights violations experienced by prisoners, including the fact that:

“[I]t is becoming common to detain people who have been acquitted by the court, whose investigation records have been closed or who have been released on bail, the arrest of family members instead of other people suspected of crimes is widely seen in many police stations, the suspects are beaten to confess to the crimes they are suspected of or the crimes they commit while they are in custody.”

They also reported that individuals “who are arrested due to current affairs”, likely referring to those individuals who have been arrested as part of the military operation inside Oromia, not being recorded in the prison’s registers, that they, “are not brought to court within the time prescribed by the law or they are not presented in court at all,” and are not told the reason for their arrest in “certain police stations.” Finally, they report that, in areas with “security problems”, people are arrested based on orders from “security councils.”

The EHRC has also been monitoring the detention of OLF leaders inside Oromia, and in May 2022, [called](#) for their immediate release, citing the fact that they were “detained without due process.” Following this report, on June 18, the Burayu District Court [ordered](#) the release of 4 senior OLF leaders: Mikael Boran, Dawid Abdeta, Lemi Begna, and Gada Gabisa. These prisoners had all previously received a court order granting their release on bail, which the Oromia police had refused to obey. Unfortunately, these four defendants [remain](#) detained to this day, and when their lawyer was questioned about next steps in their case, he responded, “There is nothing left in the courts. The court and the prosecutor acquitted them. The problem is with the Police.”

OLLAA takes note of the EHRC’s findings, which align with reports we have received from Oromo political prisoners and their families about the failure of the Ethiopian government to protect the rights of Oromo prisoners. We note that countless Oromo citizens remain in prison, including [1500](#) civilians who the government reported had been arrested in Addis Ababa on July 23rd. We call on the international community to do more to raise awareness to the plight of Oromo

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prisoners, and to pressure the Ethiopian government to ensure their rights are upheld. Finally, we call on the international community to consider launching independent investigations into these violations.

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