



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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OLLAA EXPRESSES CONCERN OVER ETHIOPIA'S TARGETING OF JOURNALISTS AND ACTIVISTS

Falls Church, Virginia (12/13/2021) -- In the past week, OLLAA has received several reports of the Ethiopian government arresting and detaining journalists, activists, and others who have expressed criticism of the war or Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed's regime. Among those arrested are [Eyased Tesfaye](#), who runs a program on Ubuntu TV that has been critical of the Abiy government, and Wabii Burqaa, a prominent online activist who was suspected of organizing a youth protest at an Irreecha festival this October. From reports, it appears that these individuals are being arrested under the authority granted by Ethiopia's nationwide [state of emergency](#), which authorizes government forces to arrest any person who they suspect has cooperated with a terrorist group, and allows them to search the home of such a person without a warrant, despite the fact that none of the abovementioned persons have any known ties to groups designated as terrorist organizations by the Ethiopian government.

Although the nationwide state of emergency has only been in effect since November, it appears that the Ethiopian government has been ramping up its targeting of journalists and other vocal critics of Prime Minister Abiy's regime for some time. According to a recent [report](#) by the Committee to Protect Journalists, in 2021, Ethiopia was the "second-worst jailer of journalists in sub-Saharan Africa".

OLLAA condemns these recent arrests, and reminds the Ethiopian government that freedom of expression is a fundamental human right. Journalists and activists should not face intimidation or detention for exercising their right to seek, receive and impart information and ideas, no matter their political stance. We call for their immediate release, and ask the international community to apply pressure on the Ethiopian government to release these prisoners and stop targeting journalists and other activists who are critical of the Abiy regime.

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