



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
12/23/2021

OLLAA WRITES TO U.S. EMBASSY REGARDING GRAVELY OFFENSIVE TWEET

Falls Church, Virginia (12/23/2021) -- On December 23rd, 2021, the U.S. Embassy Addis Ababa published a [tweet](#) stating that the Embassy would be closed on December 24th for Christmas, with an attached picture wishing readers “peace” during the holiday season. The word peace was written in English and duplicated in a number of Ethiopian languages, including Afaan Oromo. However, the Embassy used the Geez script (the script used for the Amharic language) instead of the Qubee Latin script in this picture, prompting cries of outrage from the Oromo, who view attempts to replace the Qubee script with Geez as a bid to perpetuate Amahra domination at the expense of the rights of other peoples.

In response, OLLAA has sent a letter to the U.S. Ambassador to Ethiopia, Geeta Pasi, outlining the historical significance of the Qubee Latin script to the Oromo. OLLAA highlighted the subjugation of the Oromo by multiple Ethiopian regimes, and the fact that the Oromo had the very right to speak their language taken from them for decades. OLLAA also detailed the development of the Qubee alphabet by Oromo scholars throughout the 20th century, and, as such, its existence as a source of pride for the Oromo; a symbol of their ability to shape their language and culture without external interference.

In order to address what was, at the very least, a grave lapse in judgment on the part of the Embassy, OLLAA called on the Ambassador to: 1) remove the tweet in question; 2) take active measures to ensure that the Qubee alphabet is used in future publications, including by investigating what led to the Geez script being utilized in this manner in the first place; and 3) issue a public apology to the Oromo. Finally, OLLAA took the opportunity to raise attention to a series of complaints that we have received in recent months regarding Oromos, of both Ethiopian and American citizenship status, facing discriminatory treatment by U.S. embassy staff.

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