



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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OLLAA Immediate Press Release on Black Rose Lounge Shootings

Friday July 17, 2020 International Oromo Youth Association (IOYA) organized a large-scale peaceful protest, Human Right Grand Rally where thousands of Oromos from several US states were collectively taking their concerns and grievances against human rights violations in Ethiopia to the Washington DC streets and to their representatives in Congress. At Black Rose Lounge in Falls Church (Fairfax county) later that night, Oromo youth were victims of hate crime as they were targeted and harmed with firearms because of their pro Oromo beliefs and attires by violent pro Ethiopian government individuals.

Local DVM (WDVM-TV) sourcing Fairfax County Police reported the shooting of two people at Black Rose Lounge in the early hours of Saturday July 18, 2020. Police "...found two victims suffering from gunshot wounds." according to the Local DMV. FCPD describes the suspect as a 20-year-old black male, about 5'8" to 5' 10" tall wearing a white t-shirt with a flag imprinted on it. However, Oromo Legacy Leadership & Advocacy Association (OLLAA) representatives spoke to eyewitnesses who claim the description by the police does not fit the actual perpetrator. According to two eyewitnesses, the suspect is a black Ethiopian man in his 30s, 6'2", heavy built and bald. We kindly ask FCPD to double check the validity of the description provided and the intentions of their sources. In addition, OLLAA has identified that the business has had repeated incidents of hostility towards Oromos in the past.

From sources in the Oromo community, OLLAA has come to learn that the victims were among Oromo youth who came to DC for the Human Rights Grand Rally. Oromo community leaders say that this is not an isolated event but part of a pattern where businesses owned by people with Ethiopian heritage (Habesha) and their customers have been targeting Oromo patrons for their Oromo identity and the expression. At the peaceful grand rally there were several violent pro Ethiopian government groups who attempted to disrupt the event but were quickly neutralized by peaceful yet firm volunteers from the DC Oromo youth association. OLLAA strongly denounces any identity-based hate attack against Oromos in general and the shooting at Black Rose Lounge in particular.

While OLLAA pledges to follow up with FCPD to make sure the perpetrator is brought to justice and that justice is served, OLLAA highly encourages all Oromos who are in DC for the peaceful rally and their organizers to stay focused on the task at hand and keep voicing their concerns and protest against state sponsored violence and injustices taking place against Oromos in Ethiopia.

Thank you,

Team OLLAA & Volunteers