

**Australia- Honourable Senator Marise Payne,**

Dear Honourable Senator **Marise Payne,**

My name is **(Your Name)**. As one of your constituents, I am writing to you about an urgent matter that needs your immediate attention.

I am an Australian **(citizen/permanent resident)** and I fear for the imminent safety of my family and loved ones in Ethiopia.

In recent days Ethiopia's government—led by 2019 Peace Prize Laureate Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed—has escalated human rights abuses to unconscionable levels. These abuses are particularly targeted at Ethiopia's largest ethnic group, the Oromo, and other diversified groups, who have been historically marginalized by successive regimes.

On Monday, 29 June 2020, renowned Oromo artist activist Haacaaluu Hundeessaa was gunned down in the capital city of Finfinne (Addis Ababa). This political assassination comes just days after an interview aired on Oromia Media Network (OMN) in which Haacaaluu expressed his concerns about the government's human rights abuses stemming from the command posts as well as critiques about the historical legacy of Menelik II. In less than 24 hours, on Tuesday, 30 June, 2020, the government arrested and unlawfully detained OMN journalists, prominent opposition leaders and human rights activists such as Bekele Gerba, Jawar Mohammed, Hamza Borana, and dozens of other individuals, including two American citizens from the state of Washington, Redwan Aman and Yusuf Beshir. The crackdown has been compounded by a country-wide internet shutdown effectively stifling information flow and communication with people in the country. Further, the assassination and unlawful arrests have caused an eruption of youth-led protests across Oromia, and the media is reporting that scores of peaceful protestors have been shot and killed by government security forces, and that many more have been seriously injured.

I fear that my family is on the brink of imminent, mass atrocities. The New York Times reported on 1 July 2020, that over 80 civilians have been killed in one day during protests in several towns across Oromia, including the locations of my family and friends. Given the Ethiopian PM Abiy Ahmed has indefinitely suspended national elections, Ethiopia's current severe human rights crisis has entered another phase of violent authoritarianism.

Australia has long been an ally of Ethiopia and your constituency comprises of growing numbers of concerned citizens regarding the current situation in Oromia, Ethiopia. As my representative, I call upon you to stand with your Oromo constituents in condemning PM Abiy Ahmed's violent regime, currently masquerading as a democratic government, by doing the following:

1. Initiate communication with the Ethiopian government to ensure the safety of all Australian citizens currently in Ethiopia.
2. Formally condemn state-sanctioned military and police violence against innocent civilians and protestors and demand the immediate cessation of state violence.
3. Call for an impartial and independent investigation of the assassination of Oromo artist and activist Haacaaluu Hundeessaa, by an independent body.
4. Demand the immediate release of all political prisoners, including Abdi Regassa, Yaassoo Kabbabaa, Bekele Gerba, Jawar Mohammed, Hamza Borana, Redwan Aman, Yusuf Beshir, and others and an end to unlawful imprisonment.
5. Demand an immediate end of illegal military command posts in Western and Southern Oromia.
6. Call for democracy through the timely administration of free and fair elections in 2020.
7. Call on the international community to impose sanctions if the above demands are not met.

For more information, please email me and my community via [oromoprotests2020@gmail.com](mailto:oromoprotests2020@gmail.com)

Sincerely,

**(Your Name)**