

# Formation of Oromo Action Council

TOP URGENT!

Press release on the formation of Oromo Action Council (OAC)

July 14, 2020

The Oromo society, which constitutes close to 50% of the Ethiopian population, is currently under serious attacks. The assassination of artist Hachalu Hundessa, an Oromo iconic singer and human rights activist, on 29<sup>th</sup> June 2020 in Finfinne (Addis Ababa), followed by the arrest of several prominent Oromo political leaders including Jawar Mohammed, Bekele Gerba, Dejene Tafa, Hamza Borana, Abdi Regassa, Dr. Shugut,... and many other activists, journalists and thousands of innocent civilians has escalated the harsh treatment and targeted attack on the Oromo people as a whole and worsened the human rights abuses in Oromia region. Amnesty International's recent report on Ethiopia titled "Beyond Law Enforcement" is to be noted, which stated... *"a persistence of old-style patterns of violence perpetrated by the security forces threatens to derail sustained long-term gain"*.

Security and intelligence forces under the command of Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed, a Nobel Peace Laureate of 2019, have incarcerated over 100,000 civilians, killed hundreds and injured thousands more brutally throughout the Oromia region over the past two weeks alone. In fact, the current crackdown is only an escalation of a state terror launched on the Oromo nation since the coming to power of the prime minister.

Abiy Ahmed, who jumped to the tower of power on the back of the Oromo people in 2018, in particular the sacrifices of thousands of Oromo Qerros who gave their precious lives, didn't spare time to turn his back on the very people that brought him to current latitude.

Many hoped that foundations for a democratic election could be laid down, fundamental questions of the marginalized communities be addressed, historical injustices rectified, and above all Oromo questions that accelerated the coming to power of the prime minister would be answered.

As a matter of fact, those hopes were dashed within a few months' time because of the prime minister's sinister, undue ambition to stay in power.

In a bid to hanging to power indefinitely, the Prime Minister manipulated differences and historical controversies in the heterogeneous country of more than 80 different nations and nationalities and over 110 million population. He dwelled on parsing and restoring the much-resented archaic imperial system that all non-Amhara communities of the country remember for its ruthless subjugation. He deliberately aestheticized past injustices by erecting statues of Abyssinian emperors who were known to viciously murder, conquer and enslave the Oromo people and the southern people of the country. The man has done and is doing everything he thinks would serve his desire of power perpetuation, opening old wounds that left permanent scar on our people.

Analyzing the trend how the transition to democracy has so far stepped back, it is fair to conclude that the assassination of artist Hachalu Hundessa was politically motivated and orchestrated by the regime in power, principally to create crisis that will give them an opportunity to further postpone the election and in a way quell political opponents. The regime capitalized on the pre-calculated protest that would follow the murder of the artist, to imprison Oromo opposition leaders who rejected the unconstitutional term extension of the prime minister and his Prosperity Party.

The Oromo now believe that their vocal voices are silenced. However, Oromo youth and the entire public are conducting peaceful struggle to get their leaders unconditionally released and to put an end to the regime's return to tyranny. Meanwhile, Oromo community members across the globe are angrily flooding streets of their countries of residence to bring Ethiopia's state unleashed terror to the attention of the international community and governments.

Following Hachalu Hundessa's murder, the regime jailed prominent Oromo political leaders, shut down an independent Oromo broadcaster Oromia Media Network (OMN), confiscated properties of the media outlet, arrested journalists, and activists in a humiliating raid. The whereabouts of some Oromo prominent figures is yet unknown. The government also cut internet to hide atrocities committed by security forces from the world.

The regime has unleashed all its institutional powers including the security forces, the police, the national army and its attorney general's office to hunt down and kill Oromos in every town, every village and on every street in Oromia with impunity. Tens of thousands of youth are packed into tight overflowed and unsafe prison cells endangering the health and wellbeing of innocent civilians which will likely lead to the spread of COVID-19 pandemic.

Our people can not fight this systemic onslaught alone. Therefore, it is necessary to bring together Oromo intellectuals, community representatives, opinion leaders and youth from across the world to create a network to support the struggle of the Oromo people for equality, justice and democracy. To help alleviate the suffering of our people we are creating an agency that will organize and coordinate all our efforts from round the world to defend our people and intensify our campaign against Abiy Ahmed's brutal regime, and expose its gross human rights violations to the world. We want to mobilize our human, financial and material resources in support of our people and step up our collective response to speak up for Oromo people's just cause.

Accordingly, Oromo Action Council (OAC) is officially established to serve as a voice for the Oromo people. The Council is a non-political, not-for-profit pan Oromo organization whose main purpose is to mobilize and coordinate all our financial, moral, legal, and material resources in support of the Oromo people's cause OAC will also work to inform the international community, human rights organizations and governments about the Oromo people and their struggle for equality, justice, human dignity, and democracy. In doing so, we will work in solidarity with other marginalized nations and nationalities in Ethiopia to achieve our common objectives.

While publicizing its formation OAC would like to state the following points:

- The Oromo people have the right to exist as a nation, the right to democracy, justice, and peace, and the right to express their free will on all matters pertaining to their political, economic, cultural and other aspirations without state interference. These fundamental demands and aspirations have been enshrined in the constitution and the regime has no right to deny.
- OAC condemns in the strongest terms possible, the assassination of our beloved Oromo artist Hachalu Hundessa and the sabotage being orchestrated by Abiy's government to obscure the political intent of the murder and the blatant state fabricated indictments to divert responsibility towards opposition parties and deny the victim due justice.
- OAC rejects unqualified investigations conducted by the regimes police and demands an impartial investigation for the assassination of artist Hachalu Hundessa by an independent international body.
- OAC would like to declare that it shall work closely with organizations who stand for justice and other marginalized nations and nationalities in Ethiopia and beyond

- OAC would like to call upon all diaspora Oromo organizations, civil or otherwise, to stand together at this difficult time, urgently hold an all-inclusive conference of delegates and establish a unified leadership to coordinate our actions in support of the Oromo people.
- OAC would like to call up on all federalist forces to defend pluralism from neo-Nefteгна regime led by Abiy Ahmed which fights against diversity and self rule.
- Last, but not least, OAC calls up on the International Community and Governments to stand with the just struggle of the Oromo and other nations and nationalities in Ethiopia and hold accountable the tyrannical regime of Ethiopia led by Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed for its appalling violations of human rights.