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## **OLLAA CALLS FOR A TRANSITIONAL GOVERNMENT IN ETHIOPIA**

*by*

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**Falls Church, Virginia** - As reported by the Associated Press, Ethiopia is moving towards civil war as the Ethiopian Prime Minister, Abiy Ahmed, declares a six-month state of emergency in Tigray state and orders Ethiopian government troops into the Tigray region of Ethiopia. The Ethiopian government gives an alleged attack by the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) as the reason for the state of emergency and the ordered military response. Yet, so far, no independently verified evidence has been presented to support the Ethiopian government's claim. The members of the Oromo Legacy Leadership & Advocacy Association (OLLAA) are disturbed by the Ethiopian government's military actions against the Tigray Region. Armed aggression by either party is the biggest threat to the stability of the Ethiopian state.

OLLAA joins other international communities in calling for immediate action to defuse the situation. War cannot be an answer to an internal conflict between neighboring Ethiopian communities and regions. The Ethiopian constitution stipulates regional autonomy for all national-regional states within Ethiopia. A governance structure that, unfortunately, certain groups and political parties in Ethiopia are now calling to be dismantled. As recent as a few days ago, several members of the Ethiopian government have voiced opposition to the Ethiopian constitution and the country's federal system of government, calling the Ethiopian constitution and federal system flawed and the root of recent ethnic violence in Ethiopia. OLLAA disagrees with these assertions. The Ethiopian constitution enshrines democratic values and protects the rights of all Ethiopians. Any call to abandon the Ethiopian constitution and federal system of government is unwise and undemocratic.

During this time of great uncertainty, OLLAA calls on Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed and the Ethiopian government to protect the lives and wellbeing of political prisoners, including Jawar Mohammed and Bekele Gerba, currently being detained by the Ethiopian state. As noted in the August 21st, 2020, U.S. Congressional Letter to Secretary of State Pompeo, members of Congress are calling for the Ethiopian government to show "Respect for due process and a fair and fully transparent judicial process for all those arrested during the recent unrest." We again echo these sentiments and call upon the Ethiopian government to uphold international law and due process as it pertains to all political prisoners in Ethiopia.

In closing, to save Ethiopia from completely disintegrating and further ethnic tension and civil war, OLLAA supports the call for a transitional and inclusive government. The postponement of the scheduled August 2020 election, without an exact date when the postponed election will be held, is not in keeping with democratic principles. We call upon the Ethiopian government to respect democratic norms and return the country to a path of peace, safety, and prosperity for all Ethiopians.

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

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