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OLLAA SUPPORTS SENATE LETTER TO POMPEO RAISING ALARM AND CALLING FOR U.S. ACTION IN ETHIOPIA

Oromo Legacy Leadership and Advocacy Association

Falls Church, Virginia —The Oromo Legacy Leadership and Advocacy Association (OLLAA) welcomes a joint letter from members of the U.S. Senate to Secretary of State Mike Pompeo regarding Ethiopia's growing political and human rights crisis. The Senate letter is signed by Senator Benjamin L. Cardin (M.D.), Senator Elizabeth Warren (M.A.), Senator Christopher Coons (DL) and more. The Senate letter follows the powerful August 21st, 2020, letter by members of the U.S. House of Representatives to Secretary of State Mike Pompeo regarding the same issues of concern, the growing political and human rights crisis in Ethiopia. As with the House letter, the senators in their joint letter to Secretary of State Mike Pompeo express their deep concerns about violence, repression, and the Ethiopian government's departure from democratic norms. The Senate letter echoes the House letter, which asks Secretary Pompeo to push the Ethiopian government to:

- Return to valued democratic norms,
- Respect human rights,
- Ensure a fair and fully transparent judicial process for all those arrested during the recent unrest, and
- Ensure transparent and independent investigations into the reported extrajudicial killings of peaceful Ethiopian protesters and activists.

The letter from the House of Representatives, and now the Senate, shines a powerful light on the issues facing Ethiopia and will, without a doubt, have far-reach implications for the protection of human rights, safeguarding the rule of law, and putting the country back on a path to democracy. OLLAA urges Secretary Pompeo to follow the House and Senate lead by condemning the widespread human rights violations in Ethiopia. These include the mistreatment of political prisoners, such as Jawar Mohammed and Bekele Gerba, who has been denied necessary medical attention, the killings of dozens of peaceful protesters that took place after Haacaaluu Hundessa's killing and the use of schools and stadiums as unofficial, undeclared prisons.

The United States has a vital national interest in ending repression, inter-communal violence, and democratic backsliding in Ethiopia. Only decisive action by the United States and the exertion of American leadership can achieve these critical objectives.

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

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