

We, the undersigned representatives of Oromo community associations, and religious and civic organizations in the United States write this open letter to express our profound concerns stemming from the implications of the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed between the government of Ethiopia and Somaliland on [January 1, 2024](#).

Our distress is heightened as thousands of Oromo refugees, who fled oppressive Ethiopian regimes and reside in Somalia, have recently experienced [abuses and ethnic targeting in various parts of Somalia](#), including Somaliland. Tragically, incidents such as the one on [January 10th have led to loss of lives](#), displacement, and injuries. Oromo refugees in Somalia and Somaliland are wrongly targeted because of the MoU, to which they were neither party nor even aware. We recognize that these incidents have not been government-sanctioned. We urge the government of Somalia, Somaliland and the Somali people to carry on the task of protecting your Oromo brethren from opportunistic attacks that cause tremendous harm.

We recognize that the historical ties between the Oromo and Somali people [transcend borders and time](#). For decades, [Oromos sought refuge in Somalia, including receiving support](#) during the early years of the Oromo struggle. The Oromo and Somali people [share profound historical, cultural, and familial bonds](#). In recent years, however, despite the longstanding friendship and solidarity between the two nations, Oromos have been targeted and denied refugee protection provided to other groups, including non-Oromo Ethiopians. Many have been deported back to Ethiopia from various parts of Somalia, exposing them to further harm and detention..

We call upon the Government of Somalia and Somaliland to take immediate action to protect Oromo refugees within their borders in accordance with international humanitarian norms. Additionally, we respectfully request some Somali diaspora elements to refrain from spreading hate and inciting violence. Instead, we urge them to encourage their compatriots at home not to target Oromos, emphasizing that Oromos in Somalia are brothers and sisters seeking refuge and protection from oppressive Ethiopian regimes. While we acknowledge regrettable incidents have occurred in some border areas of Oromia and Somali regions of Ethiopia in the past, during the four years of Oromo protests from 2014 onwards, Oromos dutifully protected non-Oromo individuals and businesses, even those affiliated with the Tigray government responsible for atrocities against Oromos.

Finally, affirming the right to the effort to broaden Ethiopia's options for access to the sea under prevailing international law and norms, We appeal to the Ethiopian government to respect the sovereignty and territorial integrity, as defined by the constitutive principles of the African Union, and the United Nations Charter. Simultaneously, we call upon the United Nations Higher Commissioner for Refugees (UNHRC) and other human rights organizations to protect refugees in the region, closely monitor escalating tensions, and ensure that refugees have access to necessary warnings and protection. Additionally, we urge the international community, including

the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), the African Union, and the United Nations, to promptly intervene and address the pressing refugee protection matters.

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### **Signatories**

Oromo Legacy Leadership and Advocacy Association (OLLAA)  
Dallas Oromo Community, TX  
Oromo Community of Arizona, AZ  
Oromo Community Association of Chicago, IL  
Oromo Community of Iowa, IA  
Oromo Community of Jacksonville N. Florida, FL  
Oromo Community of Las Vegas, NV  
Oromo Community of Los Angeles and Area, CA  
Oromo Community of Memphis, TN  
Oromo Community of Michigan, MI  
Oromo Community of Nashville, TN  
Oromo Community of Northern California, CA  
Oromo Community Organization of DMV, Washington, DC  
Oromo Community of San Diego, CA  
Oromo Community of Seattle, WA  
Oromo Community of Sioux Falls, SD  
Oromo Community of St. Louis, MO  
Oromo Community of Tampa Bay, FL  
Oromo Diaspora Association – ODA Boston, MA  
Oromo Diaspora Association of New York, NY  
Portland Oromo Community Association, OR  
United Oromo Community of Georgia, GA  
Global Oromo Interfaith Council (GOIC)  
Oromia Support Group (OSG)  
Oromo Professionals Group  
CC:  
H.E Ambassador Ali Ahmed, Ambassador of Somalia to the US  
H.E Ambassador Dr. Seleshi Bekele, Ambassador of Ethiopia to the US  
Representative Liaison Office, Washington, D.C., US