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CONTACT
INOF@OLLAA.ORG

OLLAA LEADS EFFORT TO ADVANCE A NATIONAL DIALOGUE ON ETHIOPIA'S FUTURE AS FIVE YEAR ELECTION PERIOD EXPIRES

*By
Oromo Legacy Leadership and Advocacy Association*

Falls Church, Virginia – The Oromo Legacy Leadership and Advocacy Association (OLLAA) today released its “Proposal for Ethiopian National Dialogue,” to outline a reform agenda and consensus process for the future of Ethiopia. This document is the result of months of consultation with various groups, including a September 24, 2020 policy session entitled, “The U.S. Role and Prospects for Federalism in Ethiopia.”. It includes input from the Oromo, Tigray, Somali, Kemant, Agawu and Bishanguel communities.

The Proposal for Ethiopian national dialogue is an effort to provide a forum for discussion and to reassert the democratic values, human rights, justice, rule of law and elections promised to the Ethiopian people in 2018. It is a vision for what Ethiopians from all regions, nations, nationalities, religions and backgrounds should address to return Ethiopia to a path of stability, peace, prosperity and democracy.

The national dialogue calls for a consensus process to set free and fair elections, the restoration and protection of free speech, independent media and assembly, the release of political prisoners and investigations into reported human rights abuses and violence by Ethiopian security forces. This agenda is rudimentary, non-controversial and clear; it reflects the democratic values that Ethiopia's government has promised and that the international community expects.

However, it appears from events in the last several months and at the Irreecha festival in Oromia, that the government is increasingly defined by violence, suppression of free speech, lack of political consensus and eroding legitimacy.

OLLAA has worked with groups across the political spectrum to offer a better vision for Ethiopia and a platform for dialogue and unity. It is clear that the Ethiopian government has not made this choice. We urge them to change course to pursue a peaceful dialogue and to practice democratic values.

The Proposal for Ethiopian National Dialogue appears below.

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

Oromo Legacy, Leadership and Advocacy Association
800 W. Broad St, 100 #263, Falls Church, VA, 22040
www.ollaa.org



Proposal for Ethiopian National Dialogue

The following reform agenda for Ethiopia was proposed by Ethiopian and Ethiopian-American experts who participated in the September 24th and 25th policy session in the United States entitled, “The Role of U.S. Policy and Prospects for Federalism in Ethiopia.” It represents the beginning of a national dialogue in Ethiopia to address the violence, instability and unrest that has accelerated across the country since the killing of popular Oromo singer and peace activist Haacaaluu Hundeessaa. It calls upon the Ethiopian government to take immediate actions to address these issues.

Reform Agenda

1. Take immediate action to release all political party leaders and peaceful civilian protesters who have been arrested and jailed:
 - a. Stop the wave of violence and ongoing human rights violations that have gripped the country;
 - b. Restore respect for the sanctity of human life and universal human rights;
 - c. Ensure fundamental freedoms of expression, press and the right to peaceful assembly; and
 - d. Take an immediate action to release political party leaders and peaceful civilian protesters who have been arrested and jailed;
2. Take immediate measures to address the human rights crisis:
 - a. Implement due process for unjustly and unfairly treated individuals;
 - b. Investigate human rights violations reported by Amnesty International and other organizations and take necessary measures;
 - c. Provide compensation for all individuals victimized by security forces; and
 - d. Implement due process for unjustly and unfairly treated individuals;
3. Engage in a dialogue on addressing Ethiopia’s current political crisis:
 - a. Consult with all nations, nationalities and peoples in Ethiopia (as stated in the 1995 Constitution of Ethiopia) to obtain diverse views and identify solutions;
4. Promote long and short-term solutions
 - a. Undertake article 39, the right to call referendum guaranteed by constitution;
 - b. Return the federal military force and paramilitary force deployed in different regions to their camps;
 - c. Hold criminals accountable; and
 - d. Promote transparency and accountability and eliminate impunity;



5. Set a timetable

- a. Recognize the end of the current government's legitimacy after Oct 5th, 2020; and
- b. Release all political prisoners by October and convene a national dialogue.

The following groups either participated in and endorsed the development of this agenda or endorse this document in support of an Ethiopian national dialogue on reform.

- **The Human Rights League of the Horn of Africa** www.humanrightsleague.org
- **Kemant Advocacy Group** www.kemantadvocacygroup.org
- **Oromo Legacy Leadership and Advocacy Association** www.ollaa.org/
- **New American Academy** www.nadcmn.org
- **Security and Justice for Tigreans in Ethiopia** www.sjtethiopia.org
- **Binshanguel Community, Australia**
- **Agawu Community of North America**