



Ms. Michelle Bachelet
United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights
Palais Wilson – United Nations
Geneva, Switzerland

February 23, 2021

Re: the risk of death or lasting harm to Jawar Mohamed, Bekele Gerba, and other Oromo political prisoners amid the ongoing hunger strike

Dear High Commissioner,

We, the Oromo Legacy Leadership & Advocacy Association (OLLAA), write to you with deep concern about the serious ill-health and risk of death that the prominent Ethiopian opposition political leaders, Mr. Jawar Mohammed, Mr. Bekele Gerba, and others are facing as they have been on hunger strike since January 27, 2021.

Mr. Jawar Mohammed, Bekele Gerba, and other Oromo opposition party leaders have been in prison since June 30, 2020. Following last summer's assassination of Oromo artist Hachalu Hundessa, the Ethiopian government has intensified the killing and imprisonment of innocent Oromo civilians, as well as opposition political leaders, activists, journalists, artists, and Oromo youth. These gross violations of international law have all been well documented.

Mr. Jawar Mohammed and Bekele Gerba are peaceful advocates for the millions of Oromos who suffer oppression under PM Abiy Ahmed's regime. These men were unfairly targeted for their activism and are suffering in prison unjustly. More recently, the harassment has taken new heights, and even visiting family members have been grossly mistreated and arrested themselves.

Thus, for the past 27 days, Mr. Jawar Mohammed and Bekele Gerba have been on hunger strike as a last resort to protest against the harassment of their family and supporters and to demand an end to state harassment of Oromo opposition politicians. Other Oromo political prisoners have since joined the hunger strike. Thus far, the Ethiopian government has not even demonstrated a shred of an attempt to address any of their demands and may even use this as an opportunity to eliminate them.

We are reaching out to UN OHCHR so that your office can help bring attention to this urgent issue. Doctors report that these men are extremely weak and immediate action is needed before their health further deteriorates. We urge you to campaign on behalf of Mr. Jawar Mohammed, Mr. Bekele Gerba, and other political prisoners who have been unjustly imprisoned and whose lives are in imminent danger.

We thank you and look forward to your response.

Sincerely,
Oromo Legacy Leadership & Advocacy Association (OLLAA)