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29 May 2021

Re: Advocacy for Oromia Statement

Advocacy for Oromia is writing this letter to ask you to pressure the Abiy government to ensure the safety of Mr. Dawud Ibsa, the Chairman of the Oromo Liberation Front, and his family who are under PM Abiy's security siege during this volatile time.

Mr. Dawud Ibsa is the chairman of the Oromo Liberation Front – a legally registered major political opposition party in Ethiopia representing more than 50 million Oromos.

Mr. Dawud Ibsa has been under house arrest for the last one year in his residence in Addis Ababa at times with all his communications cut off and constantly under surveillance. On the night of May 3, 2021 at 9PM local time in Addis Ababa, Mr. Abiy Ahmed ordered his military to raid his residence without any court order. Mr. Abiy sent his police and security forces to terrorize a major opposition party leader and his family. As they arrived at the premise, the security forces disconnected electricity in the neighborhood and forcefully broke the entrance of the compound and entered the house violently; They beat his guests including his guards and family members; And confiscated their personal properties.

Mr. Dawud's personal property and even any cash they came across is looted by the security forces. They have broken and destroyed house furniture and cut all sorts of communications from his residence. The security forces have also beaten Mr. Ibsa's security guards badly and eventually removed them from the premise. Since then, Mr. Ibsa is without security guards, and with a broken door exposing him to high security risk to his life.

We are gravely concerned for the lives of Mr. Dawud and his family and the possibility of such reckless and desperate actions may result in an unintended consequence. A similar incident on a popular activist Jawar Mohammed resulted in the death of more than 100 Ethiopians, mostly Oromos, losing their lives and another political assassination of a popular Oromo singer and activist Hacaalu Hundessaa resulted in the death of more than 500 Oromos in the hands of security forces. This is another blatant attempt by the ruling party to silence the voices of the Oromo people and may well lead to serious consequences.

Thus, we are pleading to all our supporters and the international community to demand that the Abiy administration stop harassing all political leaders at this volatile time. We also call upon you to stand with our community in condemning the violent regime by demanding the following actions:

1. Demand the Abiy administration stop harassing Mr. Dawud and his family and ensure the safety of Mr. Dawud Ibsa and his family at this volatile time.
2. Demand the immediate release of all political prisoners.
3. Demand the government of Ethiopia and other stakeholders across the political spectrum to commit to an inclusive national dialogue as political wounds cannot be healed through force of arms.
4. Demand the Abiy government to work with other stakeholders to create a new transitional government that promotes reconciliation, human rights, and respect for pluralism in Ethiopia.
5. Call on the international community to impose sanctions if the above demands are not met.

Thank you very much for your support.

Yours faithfully,

Dabessa W Gemelal,
Director, Advocacy for Oromia