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The OLF-OLA Condemns the Killing of Civilians by Abiy's Security Personnel

(OLF-OLA Press Release)

Another agonizing killing of civilians has been staged by the murderous Prosperity Party regime in Hawa Galana district of Kellem Wollega zone yesterday. The Oromo Liberation Front—Oromo Liberation Army (OLF-OLA) condemns the killing of civilians in Hawa Galan, Kellem Wollega Zone of the Oromia region. We at the OLF-OLA send our deepest sympathies to the victims and their families!

We want to draw attention to the following:

- 1. Abiy Ahmed and his 'media' outlets should not be trusted. Media reports that base their reporting on the regime's accounts should not be trusted either.***

After unending barrage of lies bordering on the pathological—personally from PM Abiy Ahmed Ali—and his media outlets, the overwhelming majority of our people and most in the international community are hard pressed to take the regime and its leadership seriously. However, we still come across some in the international media that run stories simply on the account of the regime's media reports and statements of its leadership. This should be corrected forthwith.

Just four days ago on July 1, 2022 the regime's Communication Minister told the world that a coalition of the ENDF, Federal Police, Oromia Special Forces and local militia have total control over all districts in Kellem Wollega, West Wollega and Horro-Guduru Wollega zones. And, in the last four days the regime has been telling the nation that it has strengthened its positions in West Oromia. Yet, yesterday, with the commission of atrocities against civilians in Kellem Wollega—an area the regime claimed to have total control over just four days ago—the authorities in Finfinnee insinuate that the region is, somehow, under OLA's purview. Both claims are evidently false. The regime never had total control over anything. It, however, controls the areas where atrocities have been committed as can be seen from the blockade—both geographic and informational—that it imposes on access to the areas. There is ultimately no reason to trust anything that comes from Abiy Ahmed and his media machine.

2. Atrocities follow the footsteps of Abiy's troops

When the regime's troops roamed areas of western Oromia, before the Tigray war begun on the 4th of November 2020, there were reports of atrocities in western Oromia chiefly one committed in Gulliso in early November 2020 which the regime used as one of its concocted preludes to invade the Tigray region.

During the height of the war in the north, there was virtually no regime army in Wollega, neither were there any reports of atrocities. The OLA was recruiting and training in the thousands while also conducting operations against the limited number of regime security in the area.

Since the lull in the north from late December last year, the number of Abiy's troops started to rise dramatically in Wollega, so did the reports of atrocities. From the Gidami Massacre in January, reports of atrocities begun to surface with the rise of Abiy's troops in Wollega in the tens of thousands.

The regime has now deployed more than twenty-one ENDF divisions—nearly half of the Ethiopian Army—in mainly two small zones in West Oromia: in Kellem and West Wollega. These include five commando division and two republican guard commandos. Most of these forces are not directly engaging with our forces. They are harassing, killing and burning villages in their path.

There are Amhara and other minorities in many places in Oromia outside of Wollega. There are considerable number of ethnic Amharas in West, North and East Shewa zones where members of OLA conduct multiple operations. The same is true in Southern and parts of Eastern Oromia. Why are atrocities coming only from Wollega?

While the international community is putting pressure on the regime to organize an inclusive peace process to resolve the Ethiopian civil war, the Prosperity Party is ballooning the number of its divisions in Wollega—where the regime believes is OLA's strong hold—to deny the Oromo Cause spearheaded by OLA any voice on the international stage, and any seat on the possible peaceful resolution of the Ethiopian civil war. In that process, Amhara civilians in Oromia have simply become disposable chess pieces for the lunatics in 4-kilo palace. The Oromo tradition is one that sanctions the killing of animals and improper chopping down of trees. Such a cycle of civilian tragedy is simply unheard of in our history. The Amhara community in Oromia live with their ethnic Oromo neighbors in peace. There are also past and current members of the OLA that come from the Amhara community of Oromia—including those that have risen through the ranks to commanding positions of the OLA.

3. Who is Shene anyway?

As we have repeatedly indicated, there is no known politico-military establishment called Shene in the Horn of Africa. Shene is a name given by the Abiy regime to Abiy's own fake-wigged Oromo speaking marauders in the Ethiopian army and local militia that Abiy Ahmed and co. personally order to commit heinous acts throughout Oromia, Benishangul and Amhara regions.

4. National Investigation is a non-starter

Ethiopian Human Rights Commission (EHRC) is a state-funded camouflage that masquerades as an independent human rights body. The institution and its commissioners are especially biased against Oromia, the Oromo people and Oromo Liberation Army. Recent cases in point:

- a) When a video showing the massacre of Wollo Oromos in December of last year surfaced a few weeks ago, the EHRC vowed to make a deeper investigation into the matter without naming perpetrators right away even though there was a red-handed video evidence. Conversely, when Tole Massacre in Gimbi was reported two weeks ago, it blamed the OLA on the very day of the reporting without any investigations.
- b) Following the reporting of the current massacre in Hawa Gelan district of Kellem Wollega yesterday, the EHRC, again, squarely put the blame on the OLA on the day of the reporting without any investigation. It also advised the deployment of government security forces to the area—impliedly exonerating the regime from any responsibility.

We, therefore, reiterate our call for the international community to put pressure on the regime to allow independent international investigations into all massacres committed in the country. In this regard, we ask the UN HRC to extend the mandate of the committee established to investigate atrocities committed in Northern Ethiopia to the entire country.

5. What should our people?

We call upon our people to join hands in protecting ethnic Amhara civilians that the regime is despicably considering as disposable to score political points. We also call upon our brothers and sisters in the regime's army to continue to defect in droves and join your comrades in the OLA to put an end to this terrorist government that massacres civilians every time it is politically cornered.

6. What must the IC do?

Instead of pursuing an inclusive political process, Abiy's govt is taking advantage of the 'peace talks' and the resulting lull in the north to destroy all dissenting voices in Oromia. The international community must, therefore, make improvements in Oromia a part of their preconditions to normalize relations with the government of Ethiopia. Relying only on improvements in the north to normalize relations with the regime is evidently not enough to ensure stability in the country and the broader region.

Trading accusations over the cycle massacre of civilians is disgraceful. The international community should heighten its pressure on the regime to sit down and negotiate with the clear intention of resolving the outstanding political issues that drive the securitization of politics in the country.

Stabilizing the Horn begins in Oromia!

OLF-OLA High Command

July 5, 2022