

## ADDA BILISUMMAA OROMOO (ABO-WBO)

OROMO LIBERATION FRONT



جبهة تحرير أوروامو

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### Regarding the Re-escalation of Hostilities in Oromia, Tigray, and Elsewhere in the Country (OLF-OLA Press Release)

Abiy Ahmed's war, which began in Oromia in 2019 and expanded to Tigray in November 2020, has so far claimed hundreds of thousands of lives, displaced millions, and destroyed assets worth billions. In its downright rejection of the humanitarian truce proposed by the Oromo Liberation Army (OLA) last week, the Abiy regime has once again revealed its aversion to a ceasefire in any form, in no uncertain terms, including for the sole purpose of supplying food to a famine-stricken population. The regime has not only repeatedly failed to uphold its international obligations to protect civilians in need in Oromia and throughout the country, but has also chosen to continue to use famine as a weapon of war.

However, even in these circumstances, Abiy's forces were not able to exact any noteworthy blows against our gallant fighters over the last several months, despite resorting to a scorched-earth military campaign in Oromia, which has resulted in devastating conditions for civilians. Notwithstanding the spectacular failure of its military adventures in Oromia, the regime is gambling, yet again, with the fate of millions of people by re-engaging the Tigray Defense Forces (TDF) in the north. Unable to penetrate into Tigray post-June 2021, the regime openly vowed to weaken Tigray through a starvation siege. While it amassed new forces, often through forceful recruitment, and restocked its armaments, Abiy Ahmed hoped Tigray would suffocate in the siege and implode internally. Much to the disappointment of Arat Kilo, this did not come to pass. Its renewed northern campaign has been marked by indiscriminate airstrikes on civilian centers, the most tragic of these cases being the killing of children by the bombing of a kindergarten.

We want to draw your attention to the following:

- 1) To all members of the Ethiopian National Defense Forces (ENDF), Oromia Special Forces (OSF), and Associates**

The war that the regime is waging in Oromia, Tigray, and elsewhere in the country is not your war to fight. This war is part of Abiy Ahmed's mission to install a one-man dictatorship, assisted

by his radical cabal of unitarist elites. We extend an open call to all members of the security forces to leave your camps and join the OLA as thousands of your comrades have done over the last year. Those who have been forcefully taken to the frontlines should take the first opportunity they have to escape and avoid being used as cannon-fodder. Peacefully relinquish your arms and save your life. There is no reason for you to sacrifice your one life to sustain the insatiable ambition of a tyrant.

## **2) To our people in Oromia and elsewhere**

In recent history, there has been no regime that has been as brutal and costly to the Oromo people as the current one in Arat Kilo. This is a fact that is confirmed daily by the news of countless extrajudicial murders, torture, and other brutal acts that this regime has resorted to in order to preserve its power. The Abiy regime has shown a staggering level of hatred and cruelty against the Oromo people. It has pulled at the very cords that unite us in an attempt to divide our people and turn us against each other. Our people should not be distracted by the regime's relentless propaganda campaign intended to confuse and sow discord. As it currently stands, the majority of the regime's forces, which spent the last year razing Oromo villages to the ground and murdering our people, are still in Oromia. Continue in your steadfast support for the OLA to ensure that the survival and dignity of our nation is never threatened again. Oromo media houses should continue in their commendable work to inform and engage our people about the nature of the regime; its cruelty, which has become its vocation; and the ways in which our people should support their struggle spearheaded by the OLA.

## **3) To the International community**

The international community has failed the Oromo people, the people of Tigray, and the peoples of the entire region, inter alia, by:

- *Its inability to serve as a capable and impartial mediator in mediations*

While we hold the AU in high esteem as a continental Union, it has demonstrated neither the capacity nor the willingness to resolve the underlying problems of the ongoing civil war. It has, so far, only reduced itself to parroting the regime's talking points. Crucially, it has completely ignored the war in Oromia, Benishangul, Gambella, and elsewhere in the southern half of the country, while only paying lip service to the war in Tigray. It is deeply disappointing to see an organization of fellow African people more or less siding with a dictatorship rather than the people. The rest of the international community, in particular the United States and the United Nations, has failed to bridge this gap as well. Moreover, they have at times worsened the situation by allowing themselves to be goaded by the regime into committing to initiatives that were always destined to fail. We call on the international community to reevaluate its strategy if it truly intends to be an effective arbitrator for peace.

- *Misconstruing a country-wide conflict as a Tigray (northern) problem*

To this day, any meaningful engagement with the civil war in Ethiopia by the international community has placed nearly sole focus on the Tigray conflict. While we have privately engaged with some members of the international community on this issue and, in good faith, placed credence in their promises that they would be more active in addressing the brutality being inflicted on Oromia by the regime, we have seen no progress in this. While we believe the Tigray crisis deserves every bit of attention it has received, the complete sidelining of the issue of the war in Oromia is a historical blunder. By focusing on mediation between Tigray and Abiy rather than a comprehensive process that includes all stakeholders, the international community has sanctioned the regime's miscalculations that (a) it has the chance of eliminating its opponents one by one by playing the theatrics of peace talks; (b) it could unlock western funding by offering small concessions; and (c) that it could sufficiently rearm itself and emerge victorious in a renewed war. The regime needs to be pressured to seek a genuine political resolution with the full spectrum of stakeholders across the country; anything less will only guarantee further instability.

OLF-OLA High Command

August 31, 2022