

ADDA BILISUMMAA OROMOO

OROMO LIBERATION FRONT



جبهة تحرير أوروامو

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All Oromo Nationals Arrested on *Irreecha* Carnival Should be Released Immediately

OLF Press Release

Oromos have been annually celebrating *Irreecha* festival, one of the pillars of Oromo cultural identity, at Harsadee in Bishoftu Central Oromia in millions for past years. Even spectators from Europe and America have observed this celebration as the only one of its kind in Africa involving such a huge participant. This has been going on despite sustained attempt of regimes to suppress and erase it.

However, this event is never recognized as a national event in Ethiopia. The consecutive regimes in Ethiopia and some aspirants of the ancient regime, who have been doing their best to erase the Oromo identity and forcefully assimilate into the Ethiopian one, have worked hard to suppress this event. The perpetuation of this policy sharply contradicts with the declared policy of the current regime that boasts of accepting the identity and cultural rights of all the nations and nationalities in Ethiopia. This policy has glaringly manifested itself during the current year festivity on September 30, 2012.

Normally, police forces are deployed to ensure safety of such events. In Ethiopia however, all the forces of coercion are applied to suppress the peaceful celebration not only through severe public beatings and arrest of hundreds, but also by intercepting those who are heading to the venue of celebration and confiscating personal traditional attire and ornaments so that they will never be available to anyone in the future.. Consequently more than hundred have been wounded by severe beating, as many arrested in local prisons while about that many, fifty-five of who are currently identified have been taken to the notorious *Ma'akelawy* (central) prison for the shocking torture the place is famous for. This entire ordeal took place in front of correspondents of world media present on the scene who chose not to utter a word.

The OLF knows, and assures the perpetrators and those who condone such a crime, that such atrocities have not deterred Oromo people in the past nor will it deter they coerce them into submission now. We demand the immediate release of all the detainees along with all other political prisoners. We call upon the international media to bring what they have observed to the world attention to secure the release of these innocent victims.

Victory to the Oromo People!

Oromo Liberation Front

October 1, 2012

