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OROMO LIBERATION FRONT



جبهة تحرير اورومو

**Statement of the Oromo Liberation Front (OLF)
On
H. R. 2003, the "Ethiopia Democracy and Accountability Act of 2007"**

The Oromo Liberation Front (OLF) welcomes the passage of H.R. 2003, "The Ethiopia Democracy and Accountability Act of 2007" by the US House of Representatives.

The Oromo Liberation Front (OLF) has been struggling, since its inception in 1973, to end the marginalization of the Oromo people, who make up upwards of 40% of the population in Ethiopia, and realize their inalienable political, social and economic rights. We believe the Oromo people would have everything to gain and nothing to lose from the advancement of human rights, democracy, independence of the judiciary and the supremacy of the rule of law and freedom of the press, which H. R. 2003 calls for.

The passage of H.R. 2003 is a major step in the right direction. The Bill brings to the forefront the political crisis in Ethiopia and the Ethiopian government's large-scale human rights violations. Moreover, the Bill sends a clear signal that promoting democracy and human rights are the ways to defeat international terrorism. To the contrary, the support of undemocratic regimes actually creates conditions on which extremism could thrive.

We are particularly heartened by the H. R. 2003's call for the unconditional release of all political prisoners, over whom 80% are Oromo detained under fabricated charges of being members or supporters of the OLF. There are currently over 40,000 Oromo political prisoners in Oromia and Ethiopian regime's federal prisons. Many of these prisoners have been in detention for over 15 year without charge or trial.

The OLF welcomes the call by the House for the Ethiopian regime to enter into negotiation with all opposition groups. The OLF has long maintained that a comprehensive political solution in Ethiopia needs dialogue among all the stakeholders. Finally, The OLF commends the noble efforts of the co-sponsors of H. R. 2003, Congressman Donald Payne (D-NJ) and Congressman Smith (R-NJ) and their capable staffs for conceiving and bringing to fruition this important and timely bipartisan bill, H.R. 2003. At the same time, the OLF calls on the USA Senate to pass the Bill and the United States President to sign it into law. The OLF believes that if the Bill becomes law, it would go a long way in paving the way for peace, respect for political, economic and social human rights and it lays foundation for sustainable economic development and contributes to regional stability.

Victory to the Oromo People!

Oromo Liberation Front (OLF)

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