

ADDA BILISUMMAA OROMOO

OROMO LIBERATION FRONT



جبهة تحرير اورومو

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No.: _____

His Excellency Ban Ki-moon
Secretary General of the United Nations,
The United Nations Organization,
New York, N. Y.

Dear Mr. Secretary General:

I am writing to protest the report of the UN Monitoring Group on Somalia and Eritrea (MGSE) of 20 June 2011 which wrongly linked the Oromo Liberation Front (OLF) to the so called aborted plot intended to bomb the General Assembly of the African Union in Finfinnee (Addis Ababa) during its summit of January 2011.

At the time the news appeared in media, the OLF has issued statement in which it categorically denied involvement in the alleged plot to bomb the African Union Summit and condemned any attempt on the civilian lives. As reported in the Bloomberg news, "The OLF did not and will not plan to bomb the AU headquarters." As a matter of policy, "the OLF does not target civilian populations and their properties in its military operations."

The Meles regime, since it controlled the Ethiopian state power in 1991, has continuously strived to link the OLF to the so-called terrorist plots that it fabricated and orchestrated *ad infinitum*. Recently, in its political drama called "*Addis Like Baghdad – Documentary*," the security apparatus of the regime has again tried to falsely link the OLF to its so-called terrorist plot. It is very troubling to notice that the report of the Monitoring Group is a photocopy of the documentary film made by the Meles regime's propagandist machine. (http://www.diretube.com/etv-special/addis-like-baghdad-documentary-video_58f9ec467.html).

Those who could closely examine the performance and behavior of the narrators of the said documentary film can easily conclude that they are directed and coached by agents of the Ethiopian government who were trained to deceive the world by labeling the OLF as a terrorist organization. Indeed the report of the MGSE that links the OLF to the terrorist act is flawed. Foremost, the methodology that the Monitoring Group used is flawed and has no scientific base. It has been indicated that the MGSE interviewed individuals that the Ethiopian government claimed to have been captured while they were plotting to bomb the General Assembly of the African Union. The MGSE team reached its unsubstantiated conclusion solely based on the claim of the plaintiff, i.e., the Ethiopian regime, and without counterchecking with other sources. The group did not try to double check the membership and relation, if any, of these individuals with the OLF before or during the alleged bombing plot. Indeed no evidence is provided to substantiate that these individuals were captured in the first place and confessed. Even if that is the case, given the track record of the regime's systematic torture of detainees in order to extract false confessions, admitting such confessions as evidence is tantamount to legitimizing the act of torture itself. Again, the MGSE ingenueness is in its unwarranted trust of the plaintiff as its report is fully based on the information it received from the Ethiopian government sources.

Furthermore, the MGSE failed to give an opportunity to the OLF to rebut the malicious accusations of the Ethiopian regime. As such the MGSE denied the OLF the right to be heard on such serious accusations and convicted our organization solely based on the manufactured evidence provided to it by the accuser, the Ethiopian regime. We acknowledge that in September 2010, a member of the MGSE had contacted the OLF and expressed interest to talk about the Group's mission. The OLF had expressed its appreciation for the contact and indicated its willingness to cooperate. The Group's member promised to get back to the OLF. The OLF has never heard again from the MGSE. We are under the impression that the MGSE not only decided to deny the OLF the right to be heard on the matter in which it has been falsely accused, but also did not want our input in accomplishing its mission. It is our considered judgment that the MGSE's investigation process was not fair and its report lacks veracity.

The MGSE group in addition to falsely accusing our organization has wrongly linked the Eritrean government to OLF affairs. The report gives a wrong impression that the Eritrean government patronizes the Oromo struggle. We fully understand that the Eritrean government defends itself against this Ethiopian regime's concocted incident in which the MGSE knowingly or unknowingly became a party. However, we only want to clearly indicate that the Eritrean government is respectful of the independence of our organization and does not involve itself in our work. On the other hand, the Eritrean and Oromo peoples have a long history of relations that extends over a century. Eritrean people's sympathy with the condition of the Oromo people arises from this long relation.

Mr. Secretary General

We would like to reiterate that the OLF is a legitimate organization leading the Oromo people's national struggle against the colonial regime of Ethiopia. Its goal is to enable the Oromo people to exercise their fundamental right to self-determination, the right upheld by the international community and the UN. Furthermore, it works to lay a new foundation for peaceful and harmonious relations among the peoples of the Horn in general and in Ethiopia in particular, where peoples could live together in peace and engage in their own social and human resource development.

The OLF vehemently oppose all forms of terrorism and reject terrorism as a form of struggle for the genuine and noble cause of the liberation of a people under occupation. We denounce Ethiopian state terrorism and other forms of terrorism since they destroy individuals, families, communities, institutions, and societies by violating human rights.

Mr. Secretary General:

For more than a century and half, the Oromos have lived under the brutal colonial rule of the Abyssinian/Ethiopian, that together with European colonizers, created the Ethiopian state during the European colonial era of Africa. Today the Oromo people make up a significant portion of the population of the Horn of Africa. In Ethiopia, the Oromo number about 40 million, i.e., more than 40% of the inhabitants. Oromia, the Oromo homeland, is crucial to the economy of Ethiopia and the region. The Oromos maintain distinct and homogenous culture and common language, history, descent and separate territory. The Oromos also have extensive

cultural and economic interactions with all the peoples in Ethiopia and the rest of the Horn of Africa and shares borders with almost all the regional states in Ethiopia and the majority of the states in the Horn region.

The Abyssinian/Ethiopian political elites have applied all forms of discrimination, subjugation, repression, and exploitation in all spheres of Oromo life and those of other subject nations in Ethiopia. They did everything possible to destroy Oromo identity - culture, language, custom and tradition. As subject people under occupation, the Oromos have been considered second-class citizens by the Ethiopian establishment, which monopolized the state power.

The racist attitude of the Ethiopian political elites and their crave for maintaining the status quo has been a source of obstacle for democratization and development. The UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination in one of its report stated that “...every year during the time period from 1995 to 2005, the majority of the reported human rights violations in Ethiopia have occurred in the Oromia regional state. In all years but one, extra-judicial killings and arbitrary arrests have been reported. No other regional state has such a consistency of reported human rights violation during this time period. The majority of these reported incidents relate to contexts where Ethiopian security forces countered the quest for political recognition by the Oromo Liberation Front (OLF), the most prominent representative political organization among the Oromos.”

In addition, *The International Federation for the Protection of the Rights of Ethnic, Religious, Linguistic and Other Minorities*, in a written statement to the 61st session of the UN Commission on Human Rights held in Geneva, Switzerland, in March 2005 reported: “It is not hard to present evidences that Oromos are targeted by successive regimes of the Amhara-Tigre irrespective of the apparent ideological difference they demonstrate”. From this report and others it is very clear that the present Ethiopian regime is targeting Oromos as a people for persecution of all forms.

These gross and systematic human rights violations of Oromo nationals by the government have been monitored by various human rights organizations and governments. We will not go into it in this letter, except to say that human right violations in Ethiopia is gross and on the rise and that the government is using exaggerated concerns about armed insurgency and terrorism to justify the torture, imprisonment, and sustained harassment of its critics, including Oromo school children.

The Oromo people’s struggle for freedom is a natural outcome of occupation by alien force, the Ethiopian regime. Such right, the struggle against foreign occupation and for self-determination, is recognized by international community including the UN. The Ethiopian government denies this right to the Oromo people. This goes against the UN principle enshrined in Article 1 (1) of the UN Covenant that states: “*All peoples have the right of self-determination. By virtue of that right they freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social, and cultural development.*”

The Oromo people’s struggle is for peace, freedom and stability. The OLF is for peace. It is ready to go an extra mile in search of peaceful resolution of the political crisis in Ethiopia. The

OLF will contribute towards any meaningful peace effort to reach a comprehensive settlement to achieve just peace for the Oromo and other peoples caught in the political conflict of the Ethiopian empire state. Up to now none of the OLF attempts at peacemaking are reciprocated by the present Ethiopian regime. We trust that the international community needs to exert real pressure on the regime to enter into a meaningful dialogue with the OLF to further open up the political process.

Mr. Secretary General:

We request that the UN Security Council reject the biased and baseless report of MGSE and conduct a genuine scientific research on the impacts of all forms of terrorism perpetrated by the Ethiopian regime and protect the Oromo and other oppressed peoples by implementing the principles of UN Charter and Human Rights Covenants. The OLF is willing and ready to cooperate with your office and all branches of the UN in promoting the rights of occupied peoples to self-determination. We also request you to grants us the right to be heard and allow us to defend our organization and the legitimate cause of our people.

We would like to take this opportunity to urge and plead with the UN Security Council to open its eyes to the Ethiopian regime's gross human rights violations of the Oromo and other peoples in Ethiopia and take necessary measure to stop it. We also humbly request the UN Security Council to appoint a Special Rapporteur to investigate and report the gross human rights violations of the Oromo and other peoples in Ethiopia.

Daawud Ibsaa
Chairman,
Oromo Liberation Front National Council

cc:
The US Government
The Government of the UK
The Government of France
The Government of Russia
The Government of China
The Government of Germany
The European Union
The African Union