

# ADDA BILISUMMAA OROMOO

OROMO LIBERATION FRONT



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## Obama's Planned Visit to Ethiopia is Incompatible with Claims of Democratic Principles of the US Government

### Statement from Oromo Liberation Front (OLF)

The Oromo Liberation Front (OLF) strongly opposes the planned visit to Ethiopia of the US President Barack Obama on the end of July 2015. As Ethiopia is one of the most brutal regimes of the world, OLF believes that such a visit will result in strengthening the dictatorial minority regime, will boost the regime's confidence to strengthen its ruthless human rights violations, will give a green light to the regime to continue its repression, economic exploitation, and marginalization of various nations and nationalities of the country under its usual pretense of democracy. OLF also believes that a lasting national and security interest of the US is better protected not by blessing and supporting such a well-known ruthless regime, but by being on the side of the people, supporting the struggle of the peoples of the country for freedom, democracy, and justice by using its leverage through exerting the necessary pressure on the regime on power.

In 1991 when the dictatorial military regime of Mengistu Hailemariam was overthrown by the combined struggle of the oppressed peoples of Ethiopia and a Transitional Government was about to be established, a commitment given from the US government to the Ethiopian people was an assurance of "no democracy, no cooperation". It was the then US Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs, Herman Cohen, who gave such assurance in public. However, the TPLF/EPRDF group who took over the government not only by using the military upper hand it had but also using the blessing of the US official Herman Cohn demonstrated its anti-democratic nature in practice in a matter of less than one year. Several organizations who struggle for the right of their people, including the Oromo Liberation Front (OLF), opposed the tyrannical and authoritarian practices of the TPLF/EPRDF party as the dominant force and left the then Transitional Government of Ethiopia.

Today, 24 years have passed under the totalitarian TPLF/EPRDF regime erected and protected by the West, mainly the United States of America. It is impossible to enumerate the widespread political repression, economic exploitation, and monopoly of a minority regime in all sectors political, economic and social life. Among many other reports, the repeated reports of human rights organizations such as *Amnesty International*, *Human Rights Watch*, *Human Rights League of the Horn of Africa*, including the *Country Report US State Department* all shed light to the atrocities of the current Ethiopian regime committed on the peoples of the country, mainly on the Oromo people. Nonetheless, it has to be noted that all these and many other reports show only a small fraction of the repression and brutalities perpetrated by the regime. Most of the political killings, barbaric acts of torture, politically charged arrests, abductions and disappearances carried out by the regime are hidden and remain unreported. The OLF has ample evidence that most acts of ruthlessness committed on the Oromo nationals in several parts of Oromia are not reported at all.

Overall, although some knowingly or unknowingly deny or diminish the repressive nature of the current Ethiopian regime, the truth is that the basic democratic and human rights and freedom of peoples of the country is denied in Ethiopia. While Ethiopia has never seen democratic election in its history, the undemocratic and fake nature of so called "election" carried by the current regime has no parallel even in the Ethiopian standard. Over the last 24 years, the Ethiopian people have been forced to "elect" the TPLF/EPRDF party under the barrel of the gun. The 2015 so called "election" is a clear evidence that, for the people of the country, let alone electing whoever they want, any suspicion about electing the opposition parties the

government conveniently put in the election drama has been a crime subjecting citizens to severe punishment. While the so called election drama and its result in which the TPLF/EPRDF declared 100% victory are officially over, as we speak, thousands of Oromo and other nationals are being hunted down and thrown into jail for suspicion of “electing” the few opposition who didn’t even win a single seat in the parliament.

If the US’s claims of strengthening democratic process were true, what is expected of President Obama at the moment was not to plan official visit to Ethiopia, but to use his leverage to put pressure on the minority Woyane (TPLF) regime to stop terrorizing its citizens and hold democratic election by openly condemning the process and rejecting the results of the current sham election. It is disturbing that, to the contrary, the US government, looking at the temporary benefit it may or may not get from alliance with the brutal regime and ignoring the suffering of the peoples of the country, is encouraging the regime towards committing more crimes and rewarding the regime for the endless atrocities it has already committed. This is not what is expected of a country which claims to be democratic and acts as the “police” of our planet.

It is to be recalled that, the US Under Secretary for Political Affairs Wendy Sherman, appeared in Finfinnee (Addis Ababa) on one of the days leading to the regime’s “election” drama of 2015, and endorsed the election by suggesting that “Ethiopia had made great strides toward an open and inclusive electoral process”. She went on saying that the US hopes the then upcoming election would be “free, fair, inclusive, and peaceful”. Her endorsement and blessing of the so called “election” as an official US position came at a time when the regime was completing its preparation to run a sham election marred with harassment, arrest, intimidation, and several schemes of vote rigging. The irresponsible blessing and approval by Wendy Sherman of an election which is universally well-known to be full of fraud was condemned by many human rights and other international organizations. Clearly, the endorsement and blessing of this US official has bolstered the confidence of the government to continue its crackdown on dissenting voices, blatantly harass the entire public, and finally committed naked election fraud and now shamelessly declared 100% victory. The current planned visit of President Obama has no benefit to the peoples of Ethiopia or the region. To the contrary, it is another endorsement and blessing of an election which is very well known by the Ethiopian people and the entire world to be bogus.

The Oromo Liberation Front (OLF) earnestly appeals to the US government to reconsider its position and cancel the planned visit to Ethiopia of President Barack Obama. The OLF would like to reiterate that, although such a visit of a US President could temporarily seem to reinforce the confidence of the brutal regime on power, it will never reverse or pull back the struggle the oppressed peoples of the country are waging to gain their freedom. The history of the struggle of the peoples of the region confirms that no external force can reverse the just fight of people against dictators. Sooner or later, brutal regimes will disappear like a dust. It is only a matter of time.

Victory to the Oromo People!  
Oromo Liberation Front  
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