May 16, 2013

His Excellency Mr. Ban Ki-moon, Secretary-General
Office of the Secretary General of United Nations
885 Second Avenue
New York, NY 10017, USA

RE: OSA’s Appeal Letter to the UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon about the Conflict in Eastern Oromia, Ethiopia

Your Excellency Ki-moon:

I am writing on behalf of the Oromo Studies Association (OSA), a scholarly organization established by Oromo and non-Oromo scholars to promote studies on and relevant to the Oromo and other people of Ethiopia and the Horn of Africa. The Oromo, the largest ethno-national group in the Horn of Africa, constitute 40% of the Ethiopian population. The coalition of the ruling party which has dominated Ethiopian political landscape since 1991 is controlled by the Tigrayan People’s Liberation Front (TPLF). The TPLF, which fears Oromo numerical strength in any free and fair election, has systematically destroyed all independent Oromo organizations in Ethiopia. The TPLF even destroyed the Oromo Relief Association, a non-profit organization that assisted the people who were affected by draught and famine.

Sadly, we have learned recently from reliable sources and from our contacts in Eastern Oromia, Ethiopia, that the so called "Special Police" or “Liyu Police” of the Ogaden Regional State has attacked Oromo communities in Eastern Haragee Zone of Oromia Regional State. The reports are still developing due to the fact that the Ethiopian government denied access to journalists and any independent media to the area. However, we have confirmed through our human rights researchers and through our own contacts that at least 37 individuals either have been killed or made to disappear when the Ogaden Liyu Police raided the counties of Oromia bordering the Ogaden Regional State, mainly Anniya, Jaarsoo and Miesso. An unknown number have been wounded, and an estimated 20,000 people have been displaced and are in dire situation with no assistance from the government or other non-governmental agencies. It is to be noted that charitable organizations are restricted or in many situations prevented from any movement in the country, especially in Eastern Ethiopia.
Besides killing, wounding and displacing around 20,000 people, the Special Police Force of the Ogaden Regional State, with sanction of the Ethiopian government authorities have looted a significant number of animal population from Oromo farmers and cattle herders, exposing herders to starvation. Alarmingly the Ethiopian government authorities even disarmed the police force of the Oromia Regional State thus preventing them from protecting unarmed Oromo farmers and cattle herders from being attacked by the above mentioned Special Police force.

According to The Guardian\(^1\), the so called Liyu Police is trained by an aid from the British Government’s Department for International Development (DfID) to the Ethiopian government “to train security forces in the Somali region of Ogaden, which lies within Ethiopia, as part of a five-year £13m–15m peace-building programme”. The Liyu Police however is responsible for a series of human rights abuses in the Ogaden region. Among several credible sources, the Human Rights Watch\(^2\) has reported that this paramilitary force has been repeatedly accused of “extrajudicial killings, rape, torture and other violations including destruction of villages”. Moreover, the Liyu Police is accused of orchestrating a mock execution of a Swedish journalist\(^3\) jailed in Ethiopia in 2011. It is a well-documented fact that the Ethiopian government is committing a massive human rights violation against the Oromo, the Ogaden somalis, and other peoples of Ethiopia. The government uses the Special Police to squash dissent in the Ogaden Regional State itself.

We believe that the Ethiopian government is now using this Special Police to create an artificial conflict between the Ogaden Somalis and the Oromo people in order to divert their attention from their grievances against the policies of the government itself. It is no secret that Ethiopian Government’s trained forces have been involved in creating conflicts among different peoples in Ethiopia. The TPLF dominated regime follows the policy of dividing and turning against each other, the people who have lived peacefully together or as good neighbors for centuries. Such a short-sighted policy poses serious danger to the future of all the people of Ethiopia.

In the light of the above mentioned 20,000 displaced farmers and herders, we kindly ask the UN, under your able leadership, to urge governments, particularly the governments of the US and the UK, who are involved in financing and training such oppressive forces of the Ethiopian regime, to take immediate action and pressure the Ethiopian government authorities to end the attack of Special Police Force and:

- Provide immediate humanitarian assistance of food, shelter, and medicine to the thousands Oromo farmers who have been wounded and displaced;
- Pay adequate compensation to the families of those whose loved ones were killed by Special Police Force.

\(^1\) [http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2013/jan/10/ethiopia-forces-human-rights-funding](http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2013/jan/10/ethiopia-forces-human-rights-funding)

\(^2\) [http://www.hrw.org/news/2012/05/28/ethiopia-special-police-execute-10](http://www.hrw.org/news/2012/05/28/ethiopia-special-police-execute-10)

\(^3\) [https://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=gnlsSCv96Xk](https://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=gnlsSCv96Xk)
• Provide immediate medical attention to those who have suffered major and minor injuries;

• Pay compensation to those whose cattle have been confiscated by Special Police Force;

• Allow immediate access to the affected area for local and international journalists and other charitable organizations and NGOs;

• Bring to speedy trial those who killed innocent people, while wounding many more, and confiscated the property of Oromo farmers and herders;

• Facilitate a quick return of Oromo farmers and herders to their former lands and homes from which they were driven by the Special Police force;

Finally, in the name of our scholarly organization, I humbly request you to exert your energy and diplomatic skills upon the Ethiopian government authorities to create conducive peaceful environment for the return of displaced Oromo farmers and herders to their homes. OSA members believe that as a top diplomat and principal voice of the United Nations, you have a good opportunity to alleviate the human sufferings of innocent Oromo farmers and herders who were driven from their land by the Special Police Force, with full knowledge and sanction of Ethiopian government authorities. We thank you for your interest in the wellbeing of the people of Ethiopia and the Horn of Africa.

Sincerely,

Mosisa Aga, Ph.D.
OSA President

CC

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