

Qeerroo Bilisummaa Artists' Group: A New Inspiring Force in the Struggle of the Oromo Nation for Liberation

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I have been closely following and chronicling the struggle of the Oromo students and youth for freedom, democracy, and justice in the English language since November 2009 (see [articles from Daandii Qajeelaa](#) on Gadaa.com for details). On my latest post, I have presented "[A Chronological Summary of Oromian Students' Movement Led by Qeerroo Bilisummaa: Nov. 2013 – Nov. 2014](#)" on the eve of the commemoration of the 9th year anniversary of the 2005 Oromia-wide and bloody Oromo student movement commonly known as "*Fincila Diddaa Gabrummaa*" (Revolt Against Subjugation). In that latest report I have emphasized that the Oromian students' struggle has obtained a central leadership from a vibrant group of Oromo youth organized under the name of Qeerroo Bilisummaa or simply Qeerroo.

In this brief follow up report, I will begin by introducing one of the most remarkable accomplishments of Qeerroo Bilisummaa, namely, the establishment of a young revolutionary Oromo artist group known as "Hawwisoo Qeerroo Bilisummaa", roughly translated "Qeerroo Bilisummaa Artists' Group" (translation mine) and its profound contributions in inspiring and energizing the young Oromo generation in the ongoing struggle of the Oromo nation for freedom, democracy, and justice. In particular, I will briefly present the list of songs produced and released on YouTube by this young group of singers since January, 2014. Then I will examine whether the April/May, 2014 Oromo students protests were planned, guided and executed by Qeerroo Bilisummaa or were "spontaneous" and "didn't have a central leadership" as some have claimed. I will end this note by offering some pieces of advice to Qeerroo Bilisummaa and its supporters.

Hawwisoo Qeerroo Bilisummaa: A Living Proof that "Qeerroo" is for Real

While all speakers of Afan Oromo, especially those of us in the Diaspora, have encountered the works of the Qeerroo Artists' Group on social media, especially YouTube, to my knowledge, this report would be the first piece to introduce the existence and contributions of this group of artists in writing, in the English language. As a result, I am aware that some might question the very existence of "Hawwisoo Qeerroo Bilisummaa" and as a result might think that it is all made-up. In fact many have said in the past that even the so called "Qeerroo Bilisummaa" is just made-up "by people sitting behind their computers" in the Diaspora. Therefore, for the sake of clarity, before I present some of the works of "Qeerroo Bilisummaa Singers' Group", I would like to address the issue of its very existence as follows.

To those who might think that there is no such a thing "Hawwisoo Qeerroo Bilisummaa" and that all this is made-up, I would tell them to just type "Wallee Hawwisoo Qeerroo Bilisummaa" on their YouTube search engine and they will see dozens of songs of this group including the

most recent song released on November 26, 2014, entitled “[Ka’i Ka’i](#)” meaning “stand up, stand up”. Oh yeah, again these people may now say, all that could be made-up too. They might say it could be cooked behind a computer screen, by making a clip of Oromo singers using the audio they released at home. Could all this be cooked behind a computer screen? Well, if we take that claim at its face value, how about the term “Qeerroo” and the abundant phrases containing this term that the singers use repeatedly in their songs? Those of us who listened to these songs know very well that almost all of these songs contain phrases such as “Qeerroo ka’i”, “Qeerroo falmadhu”, “Qeerroon faarsa”, “Qeerroon sitti marse”, “Qeerroon leenca goota”, and so on. For example: 1) a song released by the name of this group on January 7, 2014 says “[Kaayyoo isaa qabatee, Qeerroon Bilisummaa](#)”, 2) another song again released by the name of this group on May 14, 2014 has the title “[Oromiyaa keessa Qeerroon sitti marse](#)”, 3) yet another song released on July 19, 2014 says “[Qeerroon faarsaa](#)”, 4) another song released on July 8, 2014 has the title “[Oh lolaa Qeerroo korri yoomi](#)”, 5) another song released on August 6, 2014 has the title “[Nutu Qeerroon Leenca Goota](#)”, just to mention a few. Could those repeated words also be made up behind a computer screen? Could people sitting in the Diaspora tell that group of singers from Oromia to praise “Qeerroo” in the absence of an organized body by this name? Impossible! This line of argument doesn’t hold any water.



Nutu Qeerroon Leenca Goota



Oh Lolaa Qeerroo Korri yoomi



Qeerroon Sitti Marse

Partial List of Revolutionary Songs Released on YouTube by Qeerroo Bilisummaa Singers Group (*Hawwisoo Qeerroo Bilisummaa*) in 2014

Here is a partial list of the revolutionary songs produced and released on YouTube by Qeerroo Bilisummaa Artists’ Group between January 1, 2014 and November 30, 2014. In this list I have included only those revolutionary songs that are tagged as “Wallee Hawwisoo Qeerroo Bilisummaa” (A Song from Qeerroo Bilisummaa Singers’ Group) on YouTube. Several other revolutionary songs released by individual singers who may or may not be members of this group, many of which also praise Qeerroo, but are not tagged as such on YouTube are not included in this list. Therefore, the revolutionary songs of famous singers such as Elemo Ali, Angatu Balcha, Hirpha Ganfure, Addisu Karayyu, Shukri Jamal, Jafar Yusuf, Jirenya Shiferaw, Dadhi Galan, Kekiya Badhadha, Chala Bultum, Getachew Niguse, Ararsa Gabbisa, Sena Solomon, Galana Garomsa, Kadir Martu, Ebrahim Adam, Asha Birre, Amin Hussein, Tolawak Elias, and many others are not included in this list although they are posted on Qeerroo website. To listen or watch the songs on YouTube just click on the link provided with the title. The English translations of the titles are mine.

1. [Tedy Afro, Maal Baacca](#), meaning “Is Teddy Afro Kidding?”. This was released on January 4, 2014. [Tedy Afro is a popular Amharic singer known for praising King Minilik. King Minilik is considered as “Hitler of Africa” among the Oromo and other peoples of the South, but is considered as a hero by almost all Amhara elites].
2. [Qeerron Bilisummaa Falmaa Itti fufna](#), meaning “Qeerroo Bilisummaa will continue the Struggle”, released on January 7, 2014.
3. [Kunoo Akkas yaa Lammii koo Garaan na Ciise Reefuu](#), meaning “Yes my fellow countrymen (Oromos), I am now happy [that you continue fighting]”, released on January 12, 2014.
4. [Guyyaa Seenaan Yaadatamuu Qabu](#), meaning “A Day [April 15] that Needs to be Remembered in History”, released on April 15, 2014 in memory of heroes and heroines who lost their lives in the struggle. [Every year on April 15 Oromos across the globe commemorate “Guyyaa Gootota Oromoo” meaning “Oromo Heroes/Heroines Day”.]
5. [Baranoo Goonni si waama](#), meaning “This year the Hero is Calling you”, released on May 3, 2014.
6. [Oromiyaa Keessaan Qeerroon sitti Marse](#), meaning “You [our enemy], you are Surrounded by Qeerroo in Oromia”, released on May 14, 2014.
7. [Labsii, Labsii](#), meaning “Declaration, Declaration” released on June 19, 2014.
8. [Ohh Lolaa Qeerroo Korri Yoomii](#), meaning “Oh Qeerroo, When Shall we Meet [to go to fight] ”, released on July 8, 2014.
9. [Nuti Qeerroon Leenca Goota](#), meaning “We Qeerroo are Heroes [like] a Lion”, released on August 6, 2014.
10. [Cidha Bara Dhufuu, Cidha Bilisummaa](#), meaning “Wedding [Ceremony] of Freedom that is Coming up Next Year”, released on August 17, 2014.
11. [Qeerroon Diina Mancaase](#), “Qeerroo is about to Exterminate the Enemy”, released on August 31, 2014.
12. [Gootni Baroode](#), meaning “The Hero Roared [like a lion]”, released on September 4, 2014.
13. [Jabaadhu WBO, Abdii Saba Kiyyaa](#), “Be Strong WBO, Hope of my People”, released on September 16, 2014. [“WBO” is an acronym for *Waraana Bilisummaa Oromoo (Oromo Liberation Army)*].
14. [Ka’i Qeerroo](#), meaning “Standup Qeerroo”, released on September 24, 2016
15. [Kaasi Gowwaa Rafu](#), meaning “Wakeup that Fool Who is Sleeping”, released on November 2, 2014.
16. [Oromo Falmadhu](#), meaning “You Oromo Struggle [for your right]”, released on November 7, 2014.
17. [Sadaasni 9 Guyyaa Gootowwanii](#), meaning “November 9 a Day of Heroes”, released on November 9, 2014 for the memory of the November 9, 2005 Oromo student martyrs.
18. [Na Dhiisi Jennaan na Didde](#), meaning “I Told you [my enemy] to Leave me Alone, you Refused”, released on November 18, 2014.

19. [Ka'i, Ka'i](#), meaning “standup, standup”, released on November 26, 2014.

The above examples are some simple but glaring evidences that anyone who has the slightest doubt can cross-check for oneself to validate that “Hawwisoo Qeerroo Bilisummaa” is for real. It is also another indirect living proof that “Qeerroo Bilisummaa” is in fact for real – that it is a well-organized Oromo youth group capable of bringing about a positive and feasible change for the Oromo on the ground.

Lack of Support

Despite these and abundant other ways in which the results of the Oromo youth movement led by Qeerroo vividly manifested itself, some of our Oromo brothers and sisters are reluctant to acknowledge the contributions of this Oromo young generation and give the moral, financial, and material support they need. The information I have indicates that this group of Qeerroo singers is composed of volunteers who sacrifice their time, their energy, their own meagre material resources, and even their own money to produce the kind of modern revolutionary songs they produced and released on YouTube over the last few months. They need a lot of materials such as musical instruments, video cameras and audio recorders. They need professionals who play those instruments, poem writers and composers. They need trainers. They need money for several miscellaneous expenses. Above all, they need the moral support from the nation for whom they put their lives on the line and at a great risk and danger in order to do away with tyranny and to bring about peace, equality, freedom, justice and democracy for their people.

Downplaying, Discrediting, Discouraging

I have a friend, a former OLF member, who responds to me in a very strange way every time I mention the name “Qeerroo” to him. He didn’t dare to openly discredit Qeerroo in my presence because he knows how strongly I feel about it. But I can see from his look and his voice that he is troubled. From his strange demeanor it seems to me that he says “what are you talking about”? Perhaps he thinks I am a fool. What he probably didn’t know is that I have full information from my other friends that he is openly engaged in trying to convince people how the so called Qeerroo is “not real” and that it is all “made-up” or fabricated from behind a computer screen here in Western countries. I have encountered several others who are openly engaged in such downplaying and discrediting misinformation on social media. Probably you [readers] also have similar experiences.

Some others are more of implicit in their downplaying strategy. I have heard two prominent former OLF leaders who were asked on two different internet radios whether the April/May 2014 Oromo students’ protest had a central leadership or not. Both of the gentlemen claimed that the protests were “spontaneous” and that they “didn’t have any leadership”. Mind you, these gentlemen didn’t say “I don’t know” or “I do not have information”. They claimed that they were dead-sure that those protests were “spontaneous” and “didn’t have leadership”. Such disinformation was given at a time when the activities and statements of Qeerroo Bilisummaa were constantly reported on its website, on its internet radio, and relayed on various social media

and on several media outlets such as Gadaa.com, Ayyaantuu.com, SBO, RSO, TVOMT, Simbirtuu, and Seifenebelbal radios among others. In the midst of such widespread report on the media about the activities of Qeerroo, the implicit message that such individuals have delivered to the public by claiming that the protests were “spontaneous”, was that there is no such a thing called Qeerroo Bilisummaa or Qeerroo. I believe such a message of misinformation is deliberate and has hidden motives. Besides, it has a negative effect on the Qeerroo group because it discourages those who might be interested to give the moral and material support they need. Their diehard supporters also picked up the same message and have been engaged in spreading it on social media to this day. What a tragedy to see fellow Oromos, who claim to be struggling for the freedom of their country, engaged in such a destructive behavior and activity?

Were the April/May Oromo Student Protests “Spontaneous”?

Let’s bring the “spontaneous” claim to a test. Let us examine the April/May, 2014 protests more closely. Were those protests well organized and planned or were they spontaneous? In order to answer this question one has to look at the events leading to the major protests which occurred at the end of April and beginning of May. We all know that the major and bloodiest protests occurred on April 30 and May 1. Let’s look at what have been reported on Qeerroo website on the weeks and days leading to April 30 and which apparently many people didn’t pay attention to. On March 13 and March 20, 2014 Qeerroo website reported that Oromo students of Shakkiso Preparatory Secondary School, Guji zone, staged two separate peaceful protests. On March 20, 2014 Qeerroo reported that Oromo students of Jimma University staged a peaceful protest in their university campus. On March 22, 2014 Qeerroo reported that Oromo students of Haru Chululle School, South West Shoa zone, staged a peaceful protest. On April 5, 2014, about three weeks before the major and bloodiest protests occurred, Qeerroo released a [statement](#) from the “Central Committee of Qeerroo Bilisummaa” calling the Oromo youth and the entire Oromo nation for revolt against subjugation in general and against the so called “Addis Ababa Master Plan” in particular. It is clear that this call was the beginning of the widespread protest that later engulfed the entire Oromia. Here is an excerpt from the statement released on April 5, 2014:

The dictatorial Woyane [TPLF] Ethiopian regime has openly declared through its media that it has a new Plan to expand the city of Finfinne [Addis Ababa] by evicting Oromo farmers from their ancestral land in order to exploit and control the natural resource of Oromia by incorporating several surrounding Oromo towns such as Burayu, Sebeta, Laga Tafo, Holota, Aqaqi, Dukam, Bishoftu, Laga Dadhi, Qalitti, Galan, and several other Oromo communities under the Federal government. In order to abort this Plan; protect the natural resource of Oromia; protect Oromo farmers from eviction so that they can live in peace maintaining their land and property; all Oromo nationals should stand together without any pre-condition, based on Oromumma [Oromoness] alone, and ignite Revolt Against Subjugation [Fincila Diddaa Gabrummaa] (translation mine).

Read the full statement of Qeerroo’s call of April 5, 2014 [here](#)

Following this call of Qeerroo Bilisummaa, Oromo student protests were intensified and spread all over Oromia. On April 12, 2014, Qeerroo reported that Oromo students of Jimma University protested in their campus chanting slogans such as “Oromo land belongs to the Oromo”, “Finfinne [Addis Ababa] belongs to the Oromo”, and many more. Qeerros report was supported with the [video and audio](#) of the protest. On April 16, 2014, Qeerroo reported that Oromo students of Adama Science and Technology University protested and that the protests continued in the upcoming days. On April 20, 2014, Qeerroo reported that Oromo students of Mattu University, Illubabor zone, protested. On the same day, Oromo student protests continued in Jimma University. Between April 20 and April 25, 2014 Qeerroo reported that the regime arrested several students from various universities and that all universities have been occupied by the Federal and Agazi forces of the regime. On April 25, 2014, Qeerroo reported [supported with [audio](#)] that Oromo students of Ambo University protested getting out of their campus and that on the same day about 5, 000 Oromo students of Haromaya University protested (supported with [audio](#)). On April 26, 2014 Qeerroo reported [supported with [audio](#)] that Oromo students of Wollega University staged a huge protest. On April 27, Qeerroo reported that Oromo student of Wollega University continued protesting for the second day. On April 28, 2014, Qeerroo reported that Oromo student protests were spread to several universities, colleges and high schools: Adama University, Mattu University, Bule Hora University, Gedo Preparatory Secondary School, West Shoa zone, among others. The report of Mattu protest was supported with [audio](#). On April 29, Qeerroo reported that Oromo student protests were spread all over Oromia: Ambo University, Adama University [[audio](#)], Mattu University, Nekemte, Shambu, Dembi Dollo, Gudar, and many others. On April 30, Oromo student protest spread to all over Oromia. The bloodiest protest occurred in Ambo town in which at least 30 students have been killed by the Agazi forces of the regime.

Now, it is at this point, after several innocent students have been murdered, that those who chose to turn blind eyes and deaf ears to the sequence of events being reported by Qeerroo on a daily basis, suddenly woke up from their own illusions and from their sleeping beds and started shamelessly uttering how the protests were “spontaneous” and how it “didn’t have any leadership”. Anyone who claims to be struggling for the right of his/her people should pay attention to what is going on in that community, good or bad. However, I do not think this is only a matter of paying or not paying attention. It is a matter of one being unwilling to see a glaring and objective fact standing right in front of one’s nose.

Apart from examining the sequence of events leading to the April 30/May 1, 2014 bloody days, there are many other ways that show the protests were well organized. For example, there were many instances when protests were seen to have been ignited at various places simultaneously, at the same time and on the same day. It would be unlikely to have occurred in the absence of a centralized management. Another way to know that the protests were well organized is that the protesters were chanting uniformly the same slogans at all places, showing that the slogans have been distributed from a central body and location. So, if we believe that there should be some

organized entity that planned and led the protest, who could that “organized entity” be? I am dead sure that the only body we can point our fingers to is QEERROO. No other entity was constantly reporting the struggle of the Oromo youth over the months and years leading to the April/May protests other than Qeerroo. This is as clear as black and white.

Today, Qeerroo and its activities are spread all over social media: Facebook, Twitter, Internet radio, and YouTube to a point that it is impossible to hide or ignore. Qeerroo also has a website which has been updated daily uninterrupted for close to four years in a row unlike many Oromo websites which remain stagnant for weeks or even for months. Where is all this coming from? From “behind a computer screen”? Really? To think that any sane person or group would sit and fabricate a large sum of data and a continuous flow of news nonstop for four years is beyond my wildest imagination. The question then is, why would some individuals and/or groups chose to downplay the contributions and whiteout the very existence of Qeerroo? What could be their possible motive? I do not want to speculate or speak on anyone’s behalf. But I will say this. From my observation and some practical evidence, all individuals who try to downplay the role, discredit the contributions, and discourage the activities of Qeerroo have one thing in common. They are all former members of OLF who left the organization due to various reasons of their own. I do not want to second guess these individuals and get into further details but this common denominator speaks volumes about their motives. However, I would like to express my deepest regret that such denials and mockery are coming from fellow Oromos while the notorious propaganda mills of the TPLF/EPRDF as well as the Neo-Neftegnas, even had never alluded to such mockery nor described Qeerroo as a phantom. “Sanga abbaan gaafa cabse, ollaan ija buruksa”, as an Oromo proverb goes, meaning “if the owner of an ox breaks its horn, the neighbor penetrates its eye [make it blind]”. A self-inflicted wound is more painful than the one caused by an alien.

Some Pieces of Advice for Qeerroo Bilisummaa and the “Qubee Generation”

We, the older generation, are sorry that we had to inherit you slavery in all its ugly forms. We too, inherited the same from our forefathers. They too, endured slavery in its most savage form. It has been the fate of the Oromo nation to endure barbaric and cruel tyrannical rule of the successive Ethiopian kings and regimes for generations, beginning with Tewodros, Yohannes, Minilik, Hailesellassie, Derg, and now the TPLF minority regime. We did our best to do away with such barbaric form of colonialism and pass on to you a free country in which you can live in freedom, peace, equality, and democracy. Our forefathers too, they did their best to do away with it. It didn’t happen. We are still under subjugation. We are killed on our own country non-stop because of our land and our natural resources.

Now that we are at a historical juncture where, you, Qeerroo bilisummaa, have emerged as the face of the new Oromo generation: the “Qubee Generation”. You have a lot of opportunities and tools that we, the older generation, didn’t have. You are well-educated. In fact, you are educated in your own language. You know the history of the Oromo nation under colonial rule that many

of us didn't know. Your country, Oromia, is now roughly delineated and the whole world knows about it. Oromo nationalism, *Oromummaa*, is now at its highest peak in our history. The Oromo people have known each other from east to west, north to south, as one and one entity and notion only: *Oromummaa* (being Oromo). Conversely, the fake so called *Ethiopian nationalism* is fading and withering away from the heart and mind of almost all educated Oromo persons, especially the Qubee Generation. That fake nationalism was injected only in the mind of those of us who have been educated under the Amhara dominated education system of Haileselassie and Derg to begin with. Another opportunity you have is that you are at a historical time of information age in which fast communication tools such as internet, telephone and social media has developed to unimaginable level. Above all, you are now well organized under a vibrant organization, *Qeerroo Bilisummaa*. The following are my few pieces of advice.

1. Your organization is the most important tool you can use to do away with the tyrannical rule and restore freedom, equality, democracy, and justice. Protect it. Strengthen it and develop it.
2. It is expected the enemies of the Oromo nation, the old *nanfxanyas* (gun carrying settlers) and the neo-*nanfxanyas*, will commit every crime against you, because, for them, freedom of the Oromo nation means losing control of the natural resources of Oromia. They can't and won't let it go. They will fight you to the last drop of their blood until you overwhelm them with a united and excessive revolution. Therefore, know that the sacrifices you have to pay could get severe as you get closer to your target. There was a saying which I used to hear as a high school kid during the early years of the Derg regime: "*bilisummaan dhiigarratti magarti*", roughly translated, "seed of freedom needs blood to germinate". Unfortunately, this is what has to happen in order to get our country back.
3. We also see that some desperado groups from among the Oromo community in the Diaspora downplay your role in an attempt to discourage you. Do not be discouraged. Ignore them and keep up the good work. Remember, the overwhelming majority of Oromo nation, especially the young generation, is with you.
4. Be truthful and trustworthy. Cross-check your information and protect your credibility as much as it is possible before broadcasting or releasing to the public. I understand that, under the tight security machine of the current Ethiopian regime, getting any information, let alone accurate information or report, is very difficult. However, it is better to release limited checked and cross-checked news than including an unconfirmed report which will affect your credibility if some part of it is later found to be inaccurate. Remember, one of the ways the "do-nothing" individuals and groups discredit you is by cherry-picking some inaccurate information provided through your media.
5. Be peaceful and non-violent by all means. You do not get benefit by throwing stones or destroying property. Remember that, unlike the OLF and other opposition groups which

entertain all forms of struggle, including armed struggle and other violent means, you have chosen a “non-violent” means of struggle from the outset. Stick to it.

6. Maintain a high level of organizational discipline at all times. Do not leak any information entrusted to you from a fellow Oromo. Be a good example and a role model in your community, especially to those Oromo kids younger than you. Show love to everybody in your personal life, including to those who are members of the ruling party and old nafxanyas and to those who hate you for any reason, but do not be passive or liberal when it comes to the right of the Oromo nation. Remember, hatred breeds hatred, the way to win people’s heart is by showing them love and respect when it is due.