



Program Schedule
30th Annual Conference

**Knowledge, Collective Consciousness and
Transformation of Oromo Politics: Peace, Governance &
Development in the Horn of Africa**

July 30-31, 2016

Blackburn Center Ballroom, Howard University

2397 Sixth Street NW, Washington, DC 20059

The Oromo Studies Association (OSA) is a scholarly, multi-disciplinary, non-profit organization established in 1986 and legally registered in the United States with 503.c Federal Tax Exemption Status.

Conference Theme

This conference offers a unique opportunity to reflect on and celebrate the 30th anniversary of the Oromo Studies Association (OSA). For three decades, OSA has successfully engaged in knowledge production and dissemination about the Oromo people. It has been instrumental in deconstructing exclusionary *Ethiopianist* narratives that justified the suppression of the Oromo and other southern nations, many of which were overtly antagonistic to people's identity, politics, language and history. At this stage in its history, OSA is pleased that it continues to provide a discursive platform for generating new discussions concerning a broad range of issues that affect the Oromo, non-Oromo Ethiopians and other peoples in the Horn of Africa.

As OSA celebrates its 30th anniversary, we recognize we are at a juncture in the Oromo nation's history. OSA is marking its achievements as the Oromo nation is undergoing epochal transformation in the wake of the Oromo protests of 2014-16. In light of three decades of scholarship and advocacy and in the wake of the transformative events of the Oromo protests, it is an apt time for OSA to take stock. This year's conference will highlight the trajectories of change as the Oromo and other marginalized peoples in Ethiopia continue their inexorable movement from the political periphery to the center.

OSA's annual conference has proven to be a productive platform for lively exchange among scholars on what is required to imagine and design innovative/alternative frameworks for understanding and shaping events and processes that bring about sustainable change for the Horn of Africa region. Oromo scholarship since OSA's founding has effectively refuted the distortions and misrepresentations of the past. Anthropologists, sociologists, historians and other scientists have presented descriptions and analyses of demographic dynamism, theories of economic growth, democratic political culture, cultural and religious expressions, and indigenous views on cosmology, time-reckoning systems and moral traditions. Oromo literature is flourishing, creative arts are thriving and various other genres of Oromo aesthetic heritage are prospering. To date, there has been a dialectical relationship between Oromo scholarship and rising Oromo collective consciousness. In the next decades, we trust that these symbioses will continue with greater determination, purpose and confidence.

Saturday July 30, 2016

8:00 – 8:45 AM Registration

8:45 – 9:00 AM Opening Session

Session I: 09:00-10:15 AM

Panel: Social Protests in the Age of Social Media

Chair: Ayantu Tibesso, Ohio University

The Pros and Cons of Social Media in #OromoProtests

Yadesa Bojia, University of Washington

Hashtagifying the Oromo Movement: Can the Oromo Movement Benefit from a Clear Vision Statement? Lessons from #BlackLivesMatter,

#BringBackOurGirls & #Brexit

Gabe Hamda, ICATT Consulting

Oromo as a Network Society: Perspectives on BitGadaa

Naa'ol Dhugaa, BitGadaa Project

Commentaries in the Margins and the Act of Bending Space: Diaspora

Articulations in the Oromo Ildentisphere and the Link between Discursive and Territorial Space

Zakia Posey, The Community College of Baltimore County

Session II: 10:15-11:30 AM

Panel: The Developmental State and Its Discontents

Chair: Awol Allo, London School of Economics (LSE)

Developmental State Model: Political/Economic Power Distribution and Growing Ethnic Inequality in Ethiopia

Jianmario Jarso Gababo, Strayer University

Depoliticizing Ethiopian's Civil Service: Serving Party or People?

Mebratu Dugda Kelecha, Durham University

A Legacy of Humanitarian Crisis & Human Suffering: Overlooked Truth of Ethiopia.

Geleta Melaku, UNDP Ethiopia DRR & LR program coordinator

Institutional Pillars of Autocratic Regime's Persistence in Ethiopia, 1991 to Present

Eyob Keno, Addis Ababa University

Session III: 11:30-12:15

Plenary: Guest Speaker Tsedale Lemma

Introduced by OSA President-Elect Ezekiel Gebissa

Lunch

12:15-01:15 PM

Session IV: 01:15-2:30PM

Panel: The Cost of Dictatorship

Chair: Yeshi L. Tolessa University of Minnesota

Ethiopia since 1991: A Story of Development or Genocide?

Chala Alemo, Independent Researcher

Survivors' Testimonies as a Way of Proving Genocide against the Oromo People in Oromia, Ethiopia

Habtamu Dugo, University of the District of Columbia

My Testimony as an Oromo Woman Who Survived Various Forms of Torture

Urji Dhaba

The Oromo Struggle: Knowledge and Agency in the Age of Globalization

Asafa Jalata, University of Tennessee-Knoxville

Session V: 2:30-3:45 PM

Panel: Reconstructing History and the Struggle for Knowledge

Chair: Demitu Argo, University of Washington

Sedimented History: Ancient Oromo Knowledge of Stone Buildings

Daniel Ayana, Youngstown State University

Historicizing Politics and Politicizing History: The Oromo and the Dilemmas of the Ethiopian state

Etana Habte, University of London SOAS

The Greening of Oromo History and the Reinterpretation of Ethiopian History

Guluma Gemedu, University of Michigan-Flint

Too Close for Comfort: The Struggles of the Oromo Studies and Diaspora Studies of Africa

Brian Yates, Saint Joseph's University, PA

Session VI: 3:45-5:00 PM

Panel: Art, Poetry, Literature and Technology

Chair: Gifti Paulos, Emory University

The Literary Response to Ethnicity and Human Right Violation in Ethiopia: an Insight into Oromo Sociopolitical and Cultural Perspectives

Tsegaye Tesemma Tola, Addis Ababa University

Oromo Ceremonies in Film

Peri Klemm, California State University, Northridge

Responding to Oppression through Literature: Oromo Quest for Freedom

Beekan Guluma Erena, Harvard University

Afaan Oromoo via Digital Technology

Fekadu Megersa, Nextgen IT Solution, Beyene Robi, Washington DC High School

Coffee Break

5:00-5:15 PM

Session VII: 5:15-6:15 PM

Panel: Oromo Protests and the Quest for Oromo Unity

Chair: Siyade Gemechisa, Johns Hopkins University

Oromo Protests: Prospects and Its Impact on Ethiopian Politics

Nagessa Dube, Oromo Federalist Congress (OFC) International Support Group

A Perspective on the Background to and Prospects of the Oromo National Movement

Tesso Namarra, Independent Researcher, CA

Founding a National Council of Oromia to Chart a Road Map for the Oromo

National Liberation Struggle: A Proposal

Asafa Dibaba, Indiana University

Developing the Infrastructure and Resources to Support Engagement in Oromo Global Advocacy for Justice

Aboma Terfa, Oromo-American Citizens Council (OACC)

Session VIII: 6:15-7:30 PM

Panel: Famine as a Socio-Political and Cultural Instrument: The Case of the Oromia Regional State

Chair: Samuel Geleta, Salisbury University

The Economics of Famine as a Political Tool

Bedassa Tadesse, University of Minnesota-Duluth

The Economics of Famine as a Political Tool: the Linkage between Food Security and Political Stability

Bichaka Fayissa, Middle Tennessee State University

Institutional Unpreparedness on the Realization of Livestock Production, Poverty Reduction and Food Security in Oromia/Ethiopia

Fantahun Diba, Baltimore City Community College

Biological and Social Impacts of Famine: Lesson for Oromia Regional State, in Ethiopia

Begna Dugassa, Toronto Public Health

The Potential of Biotechnology in Addressing the Challenges of Agriculture in the Horn of Africa

Ayalew Ligaba, Delaware State University

**8:00 PM OSA General Assembly Members Business Meeting,
Hilltop Lounge**

Sunday July 31, 2016

8:00 – 9:30 AM Registration

Session IX: 9:30-10:30 AM

Roundtable: At Home in Exile: The Role and Impact of Oromo Union in North America: A Historical Look Back

Chair: Mekuria Bulcha, Nordic Africa Institute (NAI)

Lubee Birruu, University of Maryland-Baltimore Campus (UMBC)

Ibssaa Ahmad, SUNY College at Old Westbury

Zeituna Kalil, University of Tennessee-Knoxville

J. D. Tufa, Washington, US Department of Human Services

Session X: 10:30-12:00 AM

Panel: Revitalizing Oromo Indigenous Institutions and Nationalism

Chair: Bonnie Holcomb, The George Washington University (GW)

Some Ethnographic Misrepresentations of the Gadaa System: A Look through Empirical Data

Alemayehu Debelo Jorgo, Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology

Universalizing Indigenous Principles: Oromo Perspectives on Human Rights
Ezekiel Gebissa, Kettering University
Customary Laws of Conflict Resolution among Arsi-Oromo
Awol Windisa, University of Minnesota, School of Public Health
The Role of Irreechaa and Gadaa in the Oromo Unity
Dirribii Damusee Bokkuu M.T.A
The Tale of Two Competing Nationalisms: the case for trans-national solidarity
Awol K. Allo, London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE)

Session XI: 12:00AM-12:45 PM

Plenary: Keynote Speaker **Merera Gudina**
Introduced by OSA President Henok G. Gabisa

Lunch
12:45-2:00 PM

Session XII: 2:00 - 3:15

Panel: Human Rights: Violations of the Economic Security, Human Dignity and Freedom of Expression

Chair: Etana Habte, University of London, SOAS

Land Grab in Ethiopia: A Ripening Condition for #OromoProtests
Birhanu M Lenjiso, Center for International Development in Nijmegen (CIDIN), Radboud University, The Netherlands.
Impacts of Land Leases in Oromia, Ethiopia: Changes in Access to Livelihood Resources for Local People
Gutu Olana Wayessa, University of Luxembourg, Luxembourg, and University of Helsinki, Finland
Freedom of Expression under Fire in Ethiopia: The Challenges of Authoritarianism and Developmental State
Bahar Oumer, University of Essex, Human Rights Centre.
Impacts of governance and environmental degradation on the livelihood of citizens living in the Central Rift Valley of Oromia
Geleta Gelge, Oxfam America

Session XIII: 3:15-3:45 PM

OSA Awards Ceremony and Recognition of Guests and Sponsors

Coffee Break

3:45-4:00 PM

Session XIV: 4:00-4:45PM

Roundtable: The Art of Advocacy in the Diaspora: Practical Skills for Effective Advocacy

Participants

Bonnie Holcomb, The George Washington University (GW), OAG

Seenaa Jimjimo, Danboobduu Foundation, OAG

Andrea Barron, George Mason University

Nicole Southard, Amnesty International (AI)

Girma Tadesse, Financial Industry Regulatory Authority (FINRA), OAG

Zakia Posey, Community College of Baltimore County (CCBC), OAG

Oromo Youth Association Members (Biqiltuu Group)

Session XV 4:45-6:00PM

Panel: What is Next for the Oromo?

Chair: Ribka Ayana, The George Washington University (GW)

Oromo Protests as the Ultimate Rejection of the Ethiopian Developmental State

Henok G Gabisa, Washington and Lee University School of Law (WLU)

Identifying Bottlenecks and Forerunners of the Struggle

Asfaw Beyene, San Diego State University

Simple Suggestions to Help Our People

Mohammed Hassen, Georgia State University

Qerro and the Emergence of the *Qubee* Generation as a Formidable Force

Jenberu L. Feyyisa, University of North Carolina (UNC)

OROMO STUDIES ASSOCIATION
30TH ANNUAL CONFERENCE
KEYNOTE SPEAKER



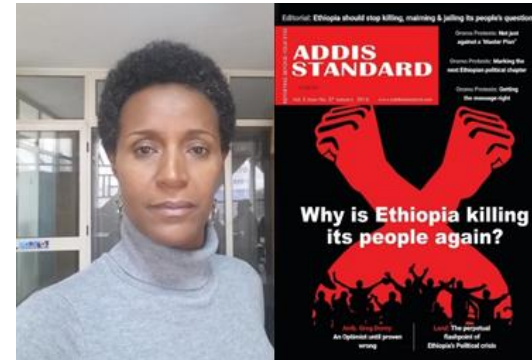
MERERA GUDINA

Chairman of Oromo Federalist Congress (OFC) & Chairman of Ethiopian Federal Democratic Unity Forum (EFDUF)

Merera Gudina was Associate Professor in the Department of Political Science & International Relations at Addis Ababa University. He received his Ph.D. in Development Studies from the Institute of Social Studies, The Hague. He is the author of *Ethiopia: Competing Ethnic Nationalisms and the Quest for Democracy, 1960 – 2000* (2003), *Ethiopia: From Autocracy to 'Revolutionary Democracy', 1960s – 2011* and several articles and book chapters on democracy, ethnicity, conflict, and rural development. Recently, he has released two books in Amharic: *The Tortuous Path of Ethiopian Politics and Reminiscences of My Life*, and *Ethiopia's Historical Challenges and Conflicting Dreams: EPRDF's Incongruous Politics*.

Merera has been in politics since his student days at Addis Ababa University. For his opposition to the government of Mengistu Haile Mariam, Merera languished in prison for seven years. In 1996, he established the Oromo National Congress (ONC) to advance the cause of self-determination for the Oromo nation. His party was renamed the Oromo People's Congress (OPC) in 2007, and later merged with the Oromo Federalist Democratic Movement (OFDM) to form the Oromo Federalist Congress (OFC). He was elected its Chairman. Merera was a Member of the Ethiopian Parliament from 2005 – 2010. He was twice Chairman of the Union Ethiopian Democratic Forces (UEDF) and Ethiopian Federal Democratic Unity Forum (EFDUF).

OROMO STUDIES ASSOCIATION
30TH ANNUAL CONFERENCE
GUEST SPEAKER



TSEDALE LEMMA

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF/FOUNDER, ADDIS STANDARD

Tsedale Lemma received a Diploma in teaching Foreign Languages from Jimma Teachers' College and a BA degree in Print Journalism from the Addis Ababa University.

Tsedale started journalism in 2000 and worked until 2005 with three different local newspapers, including as a senior reporter at the prominent newspaper *Addis Tribune* (no longer operational). At the same time, she contributed articles on African countries for the European Press Network and worked as news contributor to the *Xinhua* News Agency.

In 2005, in the wake of the post-election uncertainties, Tsedale joined the Israeli Embassy as communication expert and later as regional political affairs and media advisor to the ambassador, where she stayed until 2010.

In 2010, Tsedale left the Israeli Embassy to conduct research for her future engagement in practicing journalism. After a year of research, in February of 2011, Tsedale founded the *Addis Standard* monthly magazine.

For the last five years Tsedale played a crucial role in turning *Addis Standard* into one of the most influential magazines in the history of Ethiopia. The magazine is now home to prominent opinion makers and is considered a leading opinion shaper and influencer.

In 2014 Tsedale was named one of the 50 Rising Stars in Africa by the leading pan African Magazine *The Africa Report*.