

Date: 9 August 2016

To: United Nations Human Right Council

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Ignoring a wave of unlawful killings and enforced disappearances in Oromia is fueling further catastrophic in the region.

Following the political turmoil and mass unrest ignited in Ethiopia, and despite the concerns of the international communities are perceived by their fellow citizens after hundreds of Oromo civilian peaceful protesters were killed, including the primary school children, in a show of grossly excessive force by the Ethiopian government heavily armed security forces since last Saturday, 6 August 2016. Within three days alone at least 400 Oromo civilians were killed. More than 5000 injured while thousands were disappeared in the form of arrest and transferring to detention centers, such as **Dhidhessa**, **Tolay**, and **Wurso** and to several tens of hidden torture locations in Oromia. The detainees are held incommunicado and tortured by state security forces into “confessing” to anti-government protestors.

The Ethiopian security forces fired live bullets at protesters peacefully marched in more than 250 major towns across Oromia region. Heavy-handed measures including the arbitrary arrest by using excessive force have resulted in the unlawful killing of hundreds of Oromo civilian protesters. A wave of enforced disappearances has seen thousands of people abducted by armed forces.

For instance, one of the eyewitnesses observed the brutality of the Ethiopian government troops at scene on 6 of August 2016, [for security reasons name not identified] heartbreakingly stated,

...As all of you may have been aware of, there was a protest that took place in **Mandi** [one of the towns in Western Oromia region] last Saturday [6 August 2016] in which people got killed and injured in numbers. The city has been under military siege, by cutting everything from the city. Movement of people in and out of the city was restricted, and everything was under lock down condition for the last four days. During this time, a massive number of people (men and women) arrested and the jail is over crowded with people and our people are in a dire situation.

The attack was and is, indiscriminate, including pastors, community elders, men, women, and children. The injured people are being guarded at the hospital by the ‘Rayya Humna Warana’ [Special Military Squads] called “Agazi.” This is just information on the ground...

The other eyewitness observed the situation in Bale (Southern Oromia) mentioned,

During the public protest took place in **Gadedo** town on 6th August 2016 hundreds of them forcefully driven to **Adaba** detention center. Among those hundreds, the people I personally identified were more than 20: Jamaal Leenjiso, Ahmadaa 'Amaan, Taajuddiin Kadiroo, Mohammad Isma'el, Idiriis Kaddee, Muhaammad Kaddee, Muhaammad Sa'idoo, Mustafaa Yuunaa, A.razzaaq Mahmuud, Muktaar Ibraahim, Abdee/Haylee Ismoo, Seeyfu Huseen, A.Ra'uuf Amaanaa A.ra'uuf sh/Hasan, M/huseen Heebboo, A/rahmaan /Umaroo, A/Hakiim H/Hedoo, Jamaal Hasan, Umar Ibraahim.

Similar killings, torture, disappearances and arrest took place in several towns in the region, such as Awaday, Ambo, Nakamte, Adama, Shashamane and others.

The Ethiopian security forces have presided over a crackdown under the facade of *restoring stability* in the country from '*anti-government elements*'. However, the reality on the ground is since the Ethiopian government declared martial law on Oromo people in Oromia, and the military administration came into force, the armed security forces have to strike brutally those who would peacefully challenge the government's legitimacy or openly criticize its policies.

Irritably, no accountability for grave violations of human rights committed especially since the November 2015 recent uprising in Oromia. So far, not alone the Ethiopian government authorities have failed to accept the thousands of cases of enforced disappearances, torture and hundreds of unlawful killings documented by human rights organizations. The worst cruelty by the security forces remains widespread.

Therefore, Oromia Support Group Australia (OSGA) expresses its grave concern that ignoring a wave of unlawful killings and enforced disappearances at gunpoint in Oromia is fueling further catastrophic in the region and call upon the United Nations and associated bodies for the urgent action.

Call for action:

Independent and urgent transparent investigation:

- Encourage a credible, independent and transparent inquiry into the use of extreme force, particularly, incident resulting in death and damage, the extent to which the Ethiopian government authorities and security forces were associated and involved in human rights abuses.
- Punish or prosecute as appropriate all members of the security forces, regardless of rank or position, responsible for using excessive force against protesters.

Indiscriminate incarceration

- Immediately release from detention those who have been arbitrary arrested and have been unnecessarily accused by the Ethiopian Government for peacefully exercising their fundamental rights, including freedom of expression, and assembly.

Forced abduction and disappearance:

- Immediately make known to families the name, location and other significant information of all individuals taken into official and unofficial detention centers.
- All of those forcibly disappeared should be immediately released.
- Ratify the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance.

Treatment in Detention

- Publicly and undeniably condemn the practice of torture and the types of maltreatment in the detention centers. Make clear that there is never a justifiable reason for mistreatment, including extracting confessions, reprisal for alleged support of '*banned opposition groups*'.
- Allow independent oversight of all detention centers and prisons by providing access for international and human rights organizations and for diplomats to observing of situations and confidential talks with all detainees.

Freedom of Expression

- Eliminate restrictions on the right to free movement of domestic and foreign journalists throughout Ethiopia, including in areas where gross human rights violations are allegedly occurring. Allow the free media to visit various Oromia regions.

To UN - Security Council and Human Rights Council:

- Condemn the action and urge the Ethiopian government to stop immediately the use of brutality against civilians exercising their legal right.
- Urge the government authorities and armed personnel to hold accountable those responsible for the killings, torture, and harassment.
- Urge to release all the opposition political party members, protesters and all those arbitrarily arrested and prosecuted by the allegation of 'anti-government elements.'
- Urge the Ethiopian government to allow relevant UN human rights mechanisms, including the UN Special Rapporteur on torture and other cold-blooded, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment; 'UN Special Rapporteur on the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and of association'; and the Working Group on Arbitrary Detention to visit Ethiopia.
- Support a reliable, impartial and transparent inquiry into the use of extreme force by security militaries. The investigation should include a full responsibility for the dead and injured civilians, the circumstances of each measure and action resulting in death or injury, the degree, and scope to which government security forces were involved in human rights violations.

Cc:

- African Union
- African Human Right Commission
- Foreign Embassies in Ethiopia