2017 New Year Message from OLF Chairman Galasa Dilbo

Comrades and Compatriots,

Happy new year to you all! I hope you will celebrate the start of 2017 in good spirit with comrades, family and friends. As the new year is approaching, it is good to look ahead and think about what this year may bring us.

But, first a quick look back. 2016 was quite a year for all of us. We have been through many challenges; and the circumstances being most unfavourable for our nation. As the year ushered in, Oromia was in the midst of popular uprising spearheaded by our gallant youth. As the year progressed, our countrymen and women joined the peaceful resistance against the Tigrayan People's Liberation Front (TPLF) occupying forces in masses in every part of our country. The response of the TPLF was brutal culminating in the October 2, 2016 massacre at the Irrecha celebration in Bishoftu.

During the year, thousands of our people have paid the ultimate sacrifice for the freedom of our country; tens of thousands are languishing in Nazi style concentration camps and thousands more suffering in countless torture chambers of the Ethiopian empire. Thus, as we are on the way to end this year, our people are in the grip of state terrorism and Oromia is under state of emergency, which is a euphemism for military rule.

Notwithstanding the challenges mentioned above, our people have scored significant victories that have advanced our national struggle to a new level during the year. As the result of the immense sacrifices paid by our people, our struggle for self-determination has achieved unprecedented international attention. I salute our heroes and heroines who had made the voices of our nation heard, and exposed the hidden brutality of the TPLF regime.

Inside the OLF, we have also made significant progress: we have restructured the OLF governance and created a roadmap to get to an independent and renewed OLF. Responding to a standing demand of our people, we have started the groundwork for the creation of genuine unity among forces for the liberation of Oromia. Of course, there is still a lot of work ahead. In the coming year, we will redouble our efforts in coordinating our resources in order to transform the struggle to the highest possible level.

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In short, the current circumstances are all quite challenging to work in. But no matter what the circumstances are, we will keep our priority in sight: we will strengthen organisation, use our resources effectively putting the liberation of Oromia at the heart of everything we do. We will move forward as decisively and swiftly as we are strengthening the struggle for freedom and justice. Needless to say that our members’ continued dedication and teamwork, and support from our people are indispensable in order to carry out what we promise.

The past few years have had a significant impact on all of us, and I would like to thank you all for your magnificent support and dedication during these challenging times. In particular, I am truly humbled by the tremendous trust, love and support you have shown me since I put myself forward, once again, to be your loyal servant, in accepting the huge responsibility of being the leader of the OLF.

The year ahead will bring its own challenges, but I am sure by working together, keeping focussed on our priorities, and by putting the Oromo struggle first we can realise the goal of emancipating Oromia from a 150 years’ long colonial occupation. These will certainly continue to be my priorities, and I am convinced that I can count on you the OLF members and supporters, and indeed the entire Oromo nation to do the same.

Oromia shall be free!

_Galasa Dilbo_

_Galasa Dilbo_  
OLF Chairman