

ADDA BILISUMMAA OROMOO

OROMO LIBERATION FRONT



جبهة تحرير اورومو

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The Demand of the Muslim Community of Ethiopia is Part of the Overall Demand for Respect of the Rights of the Population from the TPLF/EPRDF Regime *OLF Statement*

The Muslim community have been demonstrating for sometimes now demanding respect for their religious democratic rights for several consecutive Fridays. Their demand is part of the right of faith guaranteed for anybody. The TPLF/EPRDF regime has been trying to force the Muslims to adopt, against their will, a recent version of a negligible minority interpretation taught by followers of Abdallah el Habashi. The regime is doing this through an imposed Islamic Supreme Council (Majlisul A'ala). The regime is harassing the majority believers who demand that the government should not interfere in religious affairs and that they directly elect their representatives in the Supreme Council.

The repressive regime is applying to the religious institutions the same strategy it uses to control the political organizations of the nations and nationalities in Ethiopia, namely infiltrating its agents/cadres and helping them take control of the activities of the organizations as a whole. Subsequently these institutions are transformed to the tool of the regime to misrule. The Muslims resist the so called Islamic Supreme Council that has been so transformed from a body that should guide the Islamic religious affairs to a government agent that is bent on curtailing their rights and directly executing the regime's detrimental policies. The Muslims insist that since these current Council Leaders are there as government cadres they want to elect their own representatives democratically instead.

Reports indicate that those who air this view are harassed under different pretexts. Those who happen to be Oromo are labelled as OLF while others are also given the cloak of their respective nations or nationality political organizations. Those whose ethnic background could not be identified are labelled as 'al Qa'ida' agents and treated accordingly. Lately this has grown into open confrontation with the regime resorting to its favourite tool of suppression, killing peaceful demonstrations. The latest killing of Oromo believers in Arsi is the most provocative and appalling.

Ironically this regime boasts of realizing equality of faith recognizing the rights of religious groups like Muslims who were mistreated under the previous regimes. It stipulates in its nominal constitution article 11 "Government shall not interfere in the conduct or practice of any religion. Religion shall not interfere in the affairs of government". However, because of its preoccupation with the 'divide and rule' principle it could not implement this. It is heavily engaged in interfering in religious affairs instigating conflict not only between different religions but also within a given religious group as well.

It is to be recalled that this irresponsible regime has instigated conflict between the followers of Islam and that of Christianity causing heavy loss in life and property at different times. It has created animosity between different sects and churches of Christianity to create conducive condition for its intervention at will. It singles out churches of Oromo majority as OLF church and harasses the members creating confrontation with other churches. Followers of *Waaqeffannaa*, traditional Oromo religion, are good targets to label as OLF and denied the right to freely follow a religion of their choice. All these indicate that this regime is preoccupied with creating and sustaining division and conflict in the people it purportedly rules, to prolong its cling to power.

OLF as a liberation organization that upholds the equality of all the religions does not condone interference in the religious right of any group. The demand of any ethnic or religious group, including the current demand of Muslims, in Ethiopia for its group right is part of overall human rights. Therefore the OLF condemns the TPLF/EPRDF regime's violent suppression of peaceful demonstration against its interference in and manipulation of the Muslim community affairs with the strongest terms.

No religion should be used to advance a political end nor should any religion use politics as a tool for its purpose. Therefore, the OLF calls upon the regime to desist from escalating the peaceful demonstration into a wrong direction by killing the demonstrators and instead stop its strategy of cowing the religious community into submitting to its orders. We want to assure that the regime will solely be responsible for whatever dangerous consequence of this reckless policy resorting to guns to suppress peaceful and legitimate demonstration.

Victory to the Oromo People!

Oromo Liberation Front

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