

Remembering Innocent Oromos in Jail: A Glimpse of Qeerro's¹ One Year Report

Compiled from Qeerroo News by: Daandii Qajeelaa

Every year on April 15, Oromo nationalists all over the globe commemorate the fallen heroes of Oromo nationalists who gave their precious lives for the freedom of their people and the liberation of their country, Oromia. Many lost their lives in the battle field while fighting the oppressive military forces of the Ethiopian regimes, past and present. Many others were killed at their homes, at their work places and in prison cells during a brutal torture for the simple reason of being an Oromo. **Yes, for the simple reason of being an Oromo!** This may sound untrue, but it is a fact. Here is how it happens.

In Ethiopia, if you are an Oromo person, by default you are a suspect of being a member or supporter of the Oromo Liberation Front (OLF). In reality, this is true in the sense that most Oromos support the OLF and reject the so called Oromo People's Democratic Front (OPDO), an Oromo organization created around the end of the previous military government of Mengistu Hailemariam by the then rebel group called the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) in the Tigray region. Today, despite the fact that the Tigari population is a tiny minority with only 6% of the Ethiopian population, the leader of TPLF, Meles Zenawi, is single handedly ruling Ethiopia using the OPDO and other similar robot and puppet organizations that are named "sister" to TPLF. Well, they are not really sisters. They are creatures invented and maneuvered by the TPLF. To see this, it is enough how they vote in the current parliament, all of them raise their hand together **always**, supporting whatever the Meles clique present to them. This can happen only with one condition – namely, they are really "robots" who actually breathe like humans.

The paranoia of the minority regime is the reality that their "robots", the OPDOs, are rejected by the Oromo people and the fact that the OLF is in the heart and mind of every decent Oromo person. They suspect every Oromo person for having relation with the OLF. If you are an Oromo teacher, you are a suspect. If you are an Oromo business person you are a suspect. If you are an Oromo farmer living in the areas where OLF operates, you are a suspect. If you are an Oromo army or police officer or pilot you are a suspect. Even if you are a member of the robot OPDO, you are still a suspect until you prove to the regime otherwise, namely, by hunting down and harassing your own people and getting their trust. Simply put, if you are born Oromo you are a suspect of having OLF in your heart and mind. Oromo people are killed, abducted and disappeared, arrested and tortured, by these OPDO robots, day-in, day-out for no apparent reason other than being an Oromo and by default being a suspect of having relation with the OLF.

¹ "Qeerroo" is an alias name for "The National Youth Movement for Freedom and Democracy". Literally, "qeerroo" means a young unmarried person in Afan Oromo.

These OPDO robots are creatures, operating under the complete control of Meles Zenawi and his core TPLF circles, and will do anything to their Oromo brothers and sisters to appease their masters, the TPLFites. Usually, it is not necessary for someone to express his/her rejection of OPDO to be put in jail or get killed. If you do not openly express your full support to the regime, that alone becomes a good “proof” for the regime to throw you to jail even kill you. Moreover, if you are an Oromo found at a “wrong place” at the “wrong moment”, you will be tagged a member or supporter of the Oromo Liberation Front (OLF) and you could get killed or end up in jail at best. That was what happened to Jagama Badhane and Kabada Badhasa in Ambo High School on November 9, 2005. They lost their lives because they were one of thousands of Oromo students of the high school who protested on that day demanding freedom and democracy for the Oromo people. They lost their lives because they have been at the “wrong place” at the “wrong time”. A similar situation happened to thousands of Oromo students, teachers, farmers, singers, and other innocent Oromo businessmen and women and civil servants who were murdered by the current regime in broad day light and thousands others who have been thrown to jail and subjected to brutal torture all over Oromia (see for example, the reports by the Oromia Support Group (OSG)² and the reports by the Human Rights Watch (HRW)³, among many other reports by respected human rights and governmental agencies).

This year’s April 15 is a historic day for the Oromos at home and abroad for two reasons. First, it is a traditional national memorial day to remember those Oromos who lost their lives while struggling to realize the freedom of their people. April 15 was chosen for a reason. It was on April 15, 1980 that ten key leaders of the OLF, including the chairman and vice chairman, were killed by an enemy and buried in one grave while they were trying to cross to Somalia for a mission. The names of these leaders are:

1. Magarsa Bari (the then chairman of OLF)
2. Gada Gammada (aka Damisee Tacaanee)
3. Abboma Mitiku (aka Abbaa Xiiqii)
4. Yigazu Banti (aka Dori Bari)
5. Falmata Caccabsa (Umar)
6. Fafam Doyyo
7. Irraana Qacale (Dhinsa)
8. Dhadacha Boro
9. Daddacha Muldhata
10. Marii Galan

April 15 is chosen to remember these leaders and all other Oromo nationalists who gave their precious lives in general, before and after them. It is also a time when all Oromos renew their commitment for the freedom of their people from a century old oppression and subjugation.

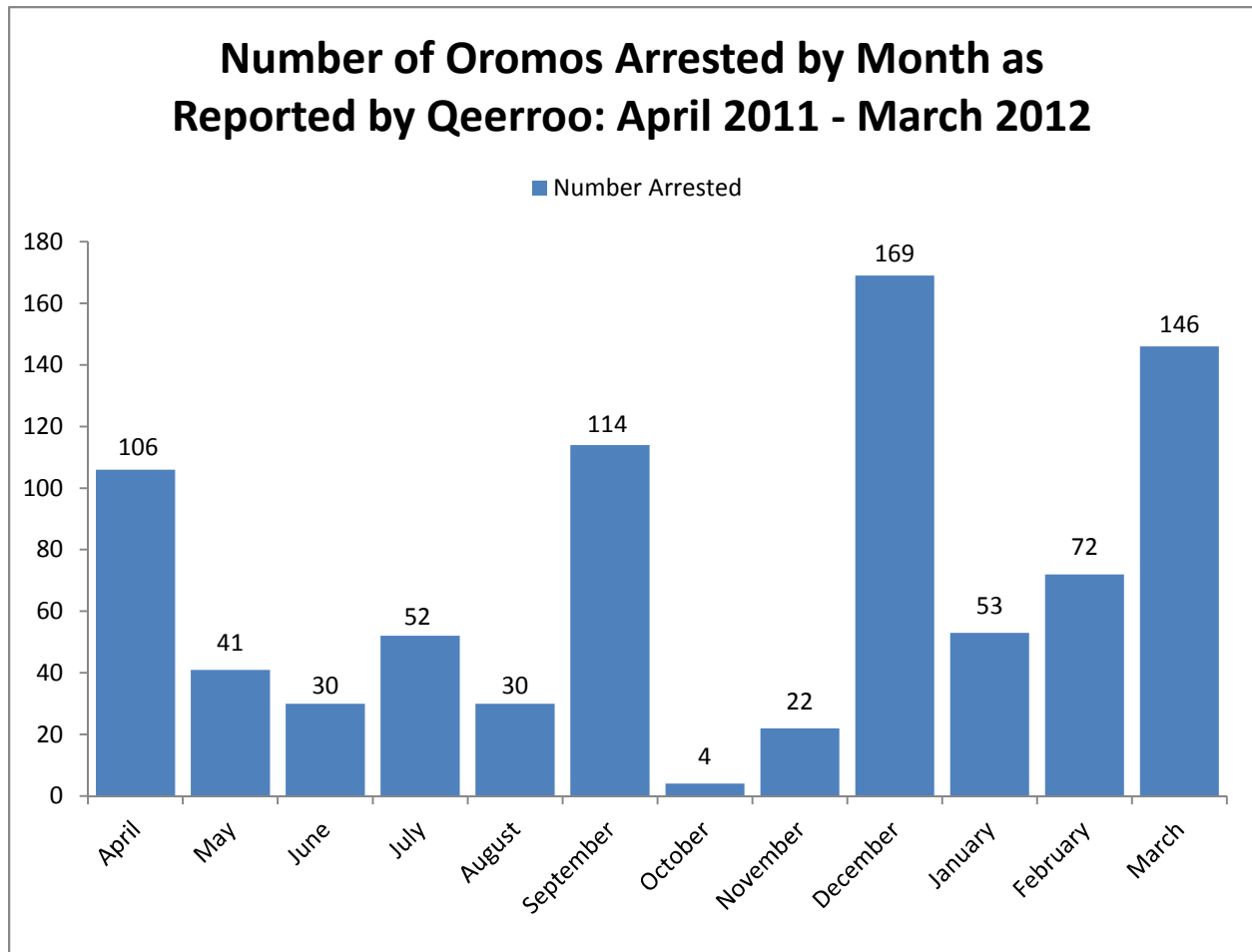
² See <http://www.oromo.org/>

³ See http://www.oromoliberationfront.org/News_Archives/hrw-eth-10may.pdf

Second, it was last year on April 15, 2011 when *Qeerroo: The National Youth Movement for Freedom and Democracy* was officially launched. The first [manifesto](#) of Qeerroo said:

“We, Oromo and all other oppressed peoples students, declare to the world and the Ethiopian peoples that we are committed to be first in torching the revolution. Given the recent history of Oromo students’ movement, we are cognizant of the price of freedom. We are determined to die in freedom than living in slavery.”

Getting organized in Oromia, in schools, higher education institutions, and at their work places, they indeed did, and are still doing what they said they would do in their manifesto. And they paid the price of freedom as they expected in their manifesto by saying “*we are cognizant of the price of freedom*”. The following chart summarizes (by Month) the number of Oromo students and other nationals arrested, as it is reported on the website of Qeerroo, since its formation: April, 2011 through March, 2012. Most of these individuals are still in jail.



It has to be noted that this chart shows only the number of people whose names are listed on the Qeerroo website between April 2011 and March 2012. It shows only a tiny fraction of those arrested

by the regime in Finfinne (Addis Ababa) during this time period. It also doesn't include the Qeerroo report on those Oromos who are killed, dismissed from higher education institutions and school, and farmers who are evicted from their land, Oromos fired from their jobs and Oromo students who have been denied higher education opportunities because they could not get a support letter from the OPDO.

The names and pictures of some of those arrested and still in jail is presented below.



Zemach Mekonnen



Efrem Bekuma



Chala Hailu



Nuradin Ahmad



Wubishet Zelalem



Lammi Tesfaye



Milkessa Migheksa



Adunya Edosa



Magarsa Wakjira



Wakjira Gutama



Kadir Martu



Nagassa Girma



Girma Turuna



Dachasa Wirtu



Gada Ragassa



Miressa Haileyesus



Dandi Bekele



Dame Olambe



Sena Merera



Dagim Gizaw



Diribsa Damte Jote



Gemechu Anbessa



Gemechis Garbaba



Asfaw Dadhi



Girma Anbessa



Ayele Alemu



Shitaye Melaku



Abinnet Hailu



Teferi Qajela

These are real people. These are our brothers and sisters. While we commemorate those who lost their lives, let's remember also who suffering in jail right now. They are also on the risk of losing their lives in prison cells, just like many have lost before them.