



# UNITED OROMO EVANGELICAL CHURCHES

TOKKUMMAA WALDOOTAA OROMO WARRA WANGEELAA

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## THE POSITION OF THE OROMO PASTORS IN DIASPORA ON THE CURRENT SITUATION OF THE OROMO PEOPLE

### Who we are:

We are Pastors, who have been called by God to serve Oromo speaking Evangelical Churches organized under the United Oromo Evangelical Churches (UOEC) in diaspora to proclaim the saving gospel of Jesus Christ.

### Reason for taking this action:

What prompted us to send out this position paper is the dire situation in which our kindred, the Oromo people, are going through these days. As Pastors born of the Oromo mothers and fathers we are seriously concerned about the difficult situation in which our people are going through. Although the oppressive system under which our people have been suffering goes back many years, at present it has reached climax. Our people are suffering under the present regime more than any other time in their history. This situation has deeply wounded our hearts and has made us restless. It is greatly saddening. We believe keeping silent in the face of what our people are going through is tantamount to agreeing with the actions being taken against them and we cannot escape responsibility before God as pastors along with those who committed the crime.

Hearing of gross violation of human rights; illegal imprisonment and torture; burning people alive with their properties; mass killings; hanging; slaying; refusing burial of dead bodies and throwing the bodies to the wild animals; killing pregnant mothers as well as those carrying babies in their arms; killing mercilessly 70 + years old respected fathers some of whom are well versed in Oromo culture and values; raping young girls and women; Oromo Pastors, Evangelists, Choir members, Church Elders, Church members, Muslim Sheks and adherents of Islamic faith, Oromo Orthodox Priests and members have been and are being murdered in cold blood. Many have been uprooted from their ancestral land and are roaming around like a wild beast without shelter, food and clothing; Oromo youths are hunted, imprisoned and killed left and right. All these are carried out by the unruly and cruel Ethiopian Government security forces. These had made us shudder, and it is with tears in our eyes that we are determined to make this known to the concerned international bodies and demand immediate stop to this barbaric undertaking and implore that the perpetrators be brought to justice.

Our faith being rooted in the Holy Bible, our Christian life and ministry is guided by the Word of God to serve Him and our fellow human beings, The Bible tells us that God created human beings in His own image and His likeness close to himself giving him authority to rule over the



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creatures and to take care of them (Genesis 1:26-27; Ps. 8:5-6). God endowed human beings with dignity and honor. It was God's intention from the beginning that humanity should live together in love and fellowship. But this ideal situation changed when man broke the commandment of God. Corruption took the place of harmony and everything got messed up. But the sovereign Lord did not give up. He planned to restore the lost relationship. He sent His servants, the Prophets and finally His own Son Jesus Christ. He paved a way to reconcile humanity to Himself and to one another. In the Old Testament He sent the prophets, like Elijah and others to reprimand kings and leaders of His people. A good example is the story told in 1<sup>st</sup> Kings 21:1-24 in which God sent Elijah to King Ahab to scold him for what he did against Naboth. Many examples can be mentioned.

Those who are called to serve God are commanded to be voice of the voiceless and speak against violation of human rights. In Proverbs 31:8-9 we are commanded "*Speak out for those who cannot speak for themselves, for the rights of all the destitute. Speak out, judge righteously, defend the rights of the poor and needy.*" Ps 82:2-4 and Isaiah 58:6-7 give us similar mission. This is a real challenge to all of us as shepherds of the people of God.

John the Baptist, at the beginning of his ministry said the following to the people who came to him for baptism: To the crowd he said, "Whoever has two coats must share with anyone who has none; and whoever has food must do likewise". To the tax collectors, "Collect no more than the amount prescribed for you." To the soldiers, "Do not extort money from anyone by threats or false accusation, and be satisfied with your wages" (Luke 3:10-14). When King Herod took his brother's wife unlawfully, John confronted Herod saying "It is not lawful for you to have your brother's wife" (Mark 6:17-18). John lost his life for standing for justice.

Our Lord Jesus Christ at the beginning of his earthly ministry made his mission clear in the following words: "*The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because He has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, to proclaim the year of the LORD's favor*" (Luke 4:18-19). Our Lord imparted this message to his followers and today to us. The Apostle Paul call on us and says to us, "*So we are ambassadors for Christ, since God is making His appeal through us; we entreat you on behalf of Christ,...*" (2 Corinthians 5:20).

People living in a country have all the right to live in peace. We believe the government has a lion's share in providing peaceful environment so that the citizens may live together in peace. Unfortunately that is not the case in Ethiopia today. It is in this situation that we raise our voice against all injustices in Ethiopia.



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1. We strongly condemn all the unimaginable torture inflicted on the Oromo people as well as on other ethnic communities in Ethiopia by the Ethiopian government security forces and we demand immediate withdrawal of the Ethiopian military from Oromia.
2. We strongly condemn the gross human right violations against all the oppressed nations and nationalities in Ethiopia.
3. We demand immediate release of all Oromo political prisoners and others without preconditions as well as thousands of Oromo prisoners and others throughout Oromia and other regions in Ethiopia.
4. We denounce the efforts of the Ethiopian government to target Oromo intellectuals to make the Oromo people leaderless.
5. We denounce the recent speeches of Deputy Minister Demeke Mekonnen and His Holiness Abuuna Matiyas, Patriarch of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church, concerning arming a particular ethnic group. We consider this as a call to civil war and igniting fire between various ethnic groups in the country. Such speeches are not expected from people who are in leadership position, especially from the Head of a Church under God.

We, Oromo Evangelical Pastors, can no more keep silent while our people are undergoing unimaginable suffering inflicted upon them by the Ethiopian security forces. It is our great desire to see our people be freed from misery and live in peace in their own country, and we are committed to take part in the process of making this a reality by action and prayer.

Therefore we extend our call:

1. To all the pastors who have been called to serve the people of God and to all the Evangelical Churches to join us taking our responsibility seriously (Genesis 4:9; Luke 10:27, 37) under God for humankind created in the image and likeness of God to find solution to the multifaceted misery the oppressed nations and nationalities in Ethiopia are undergoing and we ask you to stand with us in being voice to the voiceless; share your ideas with us and pray with us. Thus, we extend our call to you from the depth of our hearts.
2. We call upon all the organizations advocating for human rights to stand with us in speaking on behalf of the oppressed peoples in Ethiopia. We extend our invitation to you with love and respect.

***“let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever flowing stream”*** (Amos5:24)

We, the undersigned ordained Pastors of the Oromo Evangelical Churches in diaspora call upon all Pastors called by God, to be voice for the voiceless, and to all Human Rights organizations and all Church Leaders, to stand with us and denounce the gross human right violations being committed by the Ethiopian Government forces against the Oromo people and all other nations and nationalities in Ethiopia.



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Respectfully,

- 1, Rev/Dr Debela Birri Life Stream Oromo Evangelical Church of Chicago, IL
- 2, Rev Waktola Gudaya Life Stream Oromo Evangelical Church of Chicago, IL
- 3, Rev/ Dr Teka Fogi Resurrection Oromo Evangelical Church, Kensington, MD
- 4, Rev Kamiso Boru Oromo Evangelical church of Houston, Texas
- 5, Rev Gudata Gonja Oromo Evangelical Church of Denver, Colorado
- 6, Rev Alemayehu Fite: Oromo Evangelical Church of Las Vegas
- 7, Rev Wendemu Dabala: Light of The Gospel Church In Las Vegas
- 8, Pastor Antene Dhaba: Canan Oromo Evangelical Church
- 9, Rev Gemechis Bekele: Elshady Oromo Evangelical Church Of Washington Dc
- 10, Rev Alemayehu O Wedajo Oromo Evangelical Church of Washington, DC
- 11, Rev Alemu Sernessa: Oromo Evangelical Church of Atlanta, Georgia
- 12, Pastor Kansa Deresa: Oromo Evangelical Church in Columbus, Ohio
- 13, Rev Teshome Deinagde: Oromo Evangelical Church of Columbus, Ohio
- 14, Rev Kasahun Tesso : Oromo Evangelical Church of Lancaster, Pennsylvania
- 15, Rev Gemechis Guja : Oromo Evangelical Church of Lancaster, Pennsylvania
- 16, Rev Challa Gebissa Baro: Ebenezer Oromo Evangelical Church, Minneapolis, Minnesota
- 17, Rev Fikru Eticha: Ebenezer Oromo Evangelical Church, Minneapolis, Minnesota
- 18, Rev Kefyalw Amente: Power of Gospel Church in Minneapolis, Minnesota
- 19, Rev/Dr Mezgebu Tucho: Bethel International Oromo Evangelical Church, Edmonton, Canada
- 20, Rev Lami Eba: Oromo Evangelical Church of Edmonton, Canada
- 21, Rev Eticha : Oromo Evangelical Church of Edmonton, Canada
- 22, Rev Gizaw Chuta: Oromo Evangelical Church of Calgary AB, Canada
- 23, Rev Estifanos Gemta: Oromo Evangelical Church of Calgary AB, Canada
- 24, Rev Dawit Ayana: Oromo Evangelical Church of Calgary AB, Canada
- 25, Rev John Ayale: Oromo Christian Church of Toronto, Canada
- 26, Rev Desalegn Gemechu: Corner Stone Oromo Evangelical Church of Ottawa, Canada
- 27, Rev Eskindir Sarka: Oromo Evangelical Church of Seattle, Washington
- 28, Rev Yoseph Gemta: Oromo Lutheran Church of Columbus, Ohio
- 29, Rev Matewos T Shibo : Oromo Christian Church of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
- 30, Rev Addise Ettafa: Oromo Christian Church of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
- 31, Evangelist Nebiyu Esayas: United Oromo Christian Fellowship Winnipeg, Canada.
- 32, Rev Alemu Sombo : Living Hope Oromo Christian Church of Australia
- 33, Rev Dereje Dejene: Oromo Evangelical Church of Seattle, Washington
- 34, Rev Duressa M Teka
- 35: Lay Leader Mezgebu Abdisa: Oromo Gospel Church of Halifax, Canada
- 36, Evanglist Wasihun Gtema : EL-Shaddai Oromo Evangelical Church of Washington, DC
- 37, Rev Temesgen M Dabsu: Good shepherd Lutheran Church, CA (Afan Oromo Service)
- 38, Rev Wake Jeo Gerbi The Power of God Church in Oslo. Norway
- 39, Pastor Aden Kampiso Christ Kingdom Church in Phoenix, Arizona
- 40, Pastor Guyo Galgalo Oromo Evangelical Church of Phoenix, Arizona