

Joint Statement by Oromo and Yemeni human rights organizations and civic institutions

Subject: Demanding justice for the massacred Oromo refugees in Yemen

Date: March 16, 2021

We the undersigned Oromo and Yemeni Human Rights Organizations and Civic institutions have held a joint press conference, on March 16, 2021. The purpose of the conference is to exchange information and raise awareness about the atrocities committed against Oromo and other refugees in Yemen, Sanaa.

We, the participants of the press conference have learned that, historically, very positive relationships exist between the Oromo nation and the people of Yemen. As the result, many pioneers, prominent leaders and martyrs of the Oromo nation, such as Elemo Qilxu have found safety and protection among the people of Yemen, and lived in Yemen, as their second home.

While thanking the people of Yemen for their long-held friendship and hospitality, we, the participants of this press conference, unanimously express our utmost sorrow, and condemn, in the strongest term possible, the inhumane act of burning Oromo refugees alive, in Yemen, Sanaa, in a detention center, that is controlled by Houthi Militia. The horrifying massacre has taken place, on Sunday, March 07, 2021.

According to the IOM, at least 43 Oromo Refugees died at the scene, 170 were seriously injured and taken to the hospital in Sanaa. Later on, different reports from different local and international sources claim that over 450 Oromo refugees are massacred, and over 500 are severely wounded.

One migrant survivor reported, “I had six bodies on top of me, then I passed out, and I didn't wake up until I am in the hospital. I came back from the dead, and so far I feel like my whole body is dead from the condition I've been through.”

We believe, an independent investigation is needed to ensure the correct numbers. Furthermore, while offering our condolences to the families of the victims, their relatives and the Oromo nation at large, we:

1. Call up on all local authorities in Yemen, to immediately cease hostilities against Oromo and other refugees; release Oromo and all refugees, who are held in detention centers; and provide them with the safety, protection and the humanitarian assistance they seek, responsibly.
2. Call up on the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights to conduct credible, independent investigations to identify and hold the perpetrators accountable, and seek justice for the massacred Oromo refugees
3. Call up on the IOM to open a hotline/channel for Oromo refugees to contact international organizations and file their complaints to ensure their safety. We also demand the IMO to disclose the names of the massacred, and the injured whom they have recorded so far
4. Call up on the UNHCR to resettle Oromo refugees in third countries, where their safety and protection can be safeguarded, in collaboration with Oromo communities around the globe.

In solidarity, we stand!

Signatories:

1. Oromia Global Forum
2. SAM for Rights and Liberties
3. Oromia Support Group
4. Bridges for Yemen
5. Union of Oromo Communities in Canada
6. RASD Coalition (Yemen)
7. Oromo Relief Association UK

8. Human Shields
9. Oromo Human Rights and Relief Organization
10. Peace Track Initiative
11. Oromia Human Rights Group
12. Global Oromo Communities Association