



## ***Oromia Global Forum***

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**Date:** June 17, 2021

**H.E Antony Blinken**  
**US Secretary of State**  
**2201 C St NW Washington, DC 20520**

**Subject:** Recognizing the Sham Election in Ethiopia amounts to legitimizing state-terrorism, civil war and bloodshed

Your Excellency,

We, members of Oromia Global Forum ([OGF](#)), a global alliance of Oromo Civic, Professional, Faith-Based Organizations, scholars and individual Human Rights defenders and activists, residing in North America, Europe, Australia, Asia, and Africa are concerned by the mixed messages of your June 11 [press statement](#) on the upcoming “Elections in Ethiopia.”

The statement lists the multiple problems that have complicated Ethiopia’s June 2021 election. We appreciate your understanding and concerns about the chaotic circumstances surrounding the election, and ultimately share your conclusion that “The United States is gravely concerned about the environment under which these upcoming elections are to be held.”

However, as Oromos who are primarily targeted by Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed’s regime, we are gravely concerned by your statement’s call for a “post-election political dialogue to determine a path forward to strengthen the country’s democracy and national unity.”

We strongly believe that any national dialogue to address Ethiopia’s Sham election and political problems should be made before the election and set a political strategy to make the election field plain and fair for all parties. We are worried that this [press statement](#) implies proactive election victory for Abiy Ahmed, the very person responsible for causing the multiple problems listed in your statement.

Abiy Ahmed is ultimately responsible for leading the country into crises of historic proportions and worsening ethnic divisions among Ethiopians to advance his political interests and build personality cult. Abiy is personally responsible for creating the election crisis by forcing opposition groups out of the election so that only his Prosperity Party could emerge a winner. He imprisoned leaders of the two largest independent Oromo parties, the Oromo Liberation Front (OLF) and the Oromo Federalist Congress (OFC). He closed their offices and curtailed the movement of their leaders and members. The leader of the OLF, Dawd Ibsa, has been kept incommunicado after police raid on his residence on [May 3, 2021](#).

The OLF and OFC represent the Oromo people, the largest nation in Ethiopia with a population of close to 50 million. Abiy, who knew that he cannot win in a fair, free and competitive election, pushed these two parties out of the race. Even in the absence of these two Oromo parties, Abiy’s cadres are walking door to door intimidating the Oromo people to cast their vote for his Prosperity Party with threats of denying them

basic services if they do not vote for Abiy's party. In the face of an election marred by chaos and irregularities committed by Abiy, we are worried that the "post-election dialogue" in the [press release](#) alluded to recognize his victory and legitimizes the state-sponsored-terrorism conducted by the government Abiy Ahmed controls by sheer force of terror. It also implies that the release of Oromo political prisoners should come after the sham election, which is inline with Abiy's wish of crowning himself before any dialogue. We believe that the dialogue should become before the sham election and a conducive atmosphere be created for all leaders of the OLF and OFC to participate in a genuine, free, fair and competitive election. In other words, the "political dialogue" should be done before the election, not after; and that is possible only by postponing the current sham election until such a political dialogue is made and all political actors reach compromises.

While the date of the sham election is fast approaching and another extension is unlikely, we would like to bring to your attention that the recommended post-election dialogue would only legitimize the brutal rule and state-sponsored-terror of Abiy Ahmed's government and would give a tacit approval of the sham election and its consequent terror. Instead of offering solutions to Ethiopia's multiple problems that are compounded by Abiy Ahmed's personality cult and overinflated ego, the post-election dialogue will aggravate the conflicts that have spread in the country like a wild fire in the last three years. And that is our gravest concern and we are worried that the US State Department's press release has recognized Abiy as a winner of a sham election, even before the election is held.

We would like to appeal to the US State Department to re-examine its policy towards this upcoming sham election and call for an immediate release of all political prisoners and all-inclusive dialogue before the sham election. We ask the US to, as always, put pressure on the Ethiopian government to suspend this sham election and nullify its results (if conducted) until an all-inclusive dialogue is held among all stakeholders - to deescalate conflicts, tensions, the potential devastating civil war and bloodshed through confidence-building, understanding and compromises. We believe that restoring peace in Ethiopia is in the best interest of the US. And not stopping Abiy Ahmed from conducting the sham election could turn Ethiopia and the whole Horn of Africa region into a fireball, anarchy and possibly a breeding ground for criminals and extremists.

Sincerely,

Oromia Global Forum