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For Immediate Release

Subject: OGF Condemns the Karrayyuu Oromo massacre and calls for justice and accountability

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The "Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia" executed 14 Karrayyuu Oromo community leaders extrajudicially two months ago during their traditional democratic power transfer ritual.

Now, the government has thrown the investigation under the rag, the good old way the assassin-in-chief, the Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed, operates.

"The Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia" is nothing but a smokescreen Ethiopia uses to conceal its dark and violent Imperial history vehemently.

On the evening of December 1, 2021, 14 immensely revered Karrayyuu Oromo community leaders were abducted during their sacred democratic power transfer ritual, taken to a remote location, and summarily executed. Two others escaped the firing squad, later to give eyewitness accounts of the event. Several others were sent to torture chambers. The operation was a joint effort of Oromia State and the Federal Government police forces, as established by several government entities, as recently confirmed by the US Foreign Relations Committee. Surprisingly, the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission, a federal government agency that often gives a blind eye to atrocities that occur to Oromos, has corroborated that the government hit squad is the culprit, despite the government's shameless effort to assign the blame to Oromo Liberation Army. The operation was directed in real-time by high-level Prosperity Party officials. Now, almost two months since the incident, no one has been, nor expected to be brought to justice.

We, members of Oromia Global Forum (OGF), a global alliance of Oromo Civic, Professional, and Faith-Based Organizations and individual Human Rights defenders and activists residing in North America, Europe, Australia, Asia, and Africa shall never forget nor forgive, for this government has gone too far for too long brutalizing Oromos with impunity.

It is not uncommon for political assassinations to happen anywhere in the world. The culprit is someone killing the ruling party member(s) or a government official in most cases. In Ethiopia, it's the reverse, as with all other things Ethiopian; political assassination is exclusively the government's job. For the blood-thirsty despot, Abiy Ahmed, political assassination is everything: science, art, and sport. Anyone can get away with murder if they remain loyal to him. His government is now working relentlessly to sweep the investigation of the Karrayyuu community leaders' massacre under the rug, just like that of Haacaaluu Hundeessaa, our revered Oromo artist and human rights activist. Abiy never uttered a word about this hideous act of barbarism in public. Such is the modus operandi of the so-called "Democratic Republic of Ethiopia" and her Nobel Peace Prize laureate Prime Minister.

Ethiopia has now proven that it is precisely the opposite of what it says it is and what it stands for, with double deception embedded in its official name. "Federal Democratic Republic" does not fit a country that neither understands the meaning of federalism nor has the slightest clue what democracy entails. Ethiopia boasts 3000 years of civilization and freedom. One may ask: is there a 3000-year-old documented history attesting to it? Ethiopia established its current-day boundaries after Menelik II, ruler of the tiny Amhara kingdom, brutally annexed the southern and eastern nations, including the Oromo land, during the 1882-1886 intense colonial war of expansion. This seminal event deprived the Oromo people, including the Karrayyuu, of sovereign Gadaa democratic socio-political culture. Oromia has thus nothing to do with this 3000 years history which is a myth and mystery to all non-Amhara populations in Ethiopia. What documented seminal event took place 3000 years ago, triggering the formation of the Ethiopian empire anyway? None. *Ethiopianists* (the Amhara right-wing elites) have no shred of evidence that Ethiopia's pre-1882 history included Oromia, nor was it known as Ethiopia then. The name "Ethiopia" took root in the 1940s. It was called Abyssinia before. Abyssinia/Ethiopia never saw a peaceful transfer of power throughout its history. On the contrary, even after so many years of suppression, the Oromos, like the Karrayyuu, continue practicing the Gadaa democracy locally, no matter how much the Amhara loathe it.

The geographic location of an area known as Ethiopia, in all global maps produced before 1850, barely touches the present-day Ethiopian landmass. The name "Ethiopia," which appears several times in the Bible, thus does not refer to present-day Ethiopia, contrary to the make-believe Ethiopianist historians' assertion. Moreover, the original text in the scripture is Cush, not Ethiopia. The myth, the lie and the deception are intended to deny the Oromo their right to retain their pre 1880s democratic roots, a tradition of peace, harmony, and just society. The killing of the Karrayyuu community leaders indicates the level of the regime's desperation and fear of the Oromo Gadaa democracy.

Hence the 3000 years old Ethiopia is all but a myth, a lie repeated trillion times, to entrap the nations that Menelik II forcibly annexed; if they want to go back to their roots, what is precisely happening in the case of Oromia. *Ethiopianists* claim that Ethiopia has never been colonized, even though it was under Italy's occupation for five solid years. Following a defeat, the reigning monarch fled Ethiopia, leaving it without a functioning government during that time. Why do the Amhara elites need to build a reputation based on myth and deception, longing for unmerited prominence? The people of today's Ethiopia have a shared history of misery, poverty, famine, war, exploitation, oppression, etc., of only 150 years; no matter how often the "Ethiopianists", the forces that struggle to restore the monarchy, feudalism and supremacy of the Amhara elites, are concealing the truth.

John F. Kennedy once said: "*The great enemy of the truth is very often not the lie, deliberate, contrived and dishonest, but the myth, persistent, persuasive and unrealistic.*" Ethiopia must come to terms with its tragic history and redress the past wrongs or risk an irreparable breakup and further fragmentation that started with Eritrean Independence in 1993 in the immediate future. Atrocities perpetrated against the Oromo, such as the killings of the Karrayyuu leaders, to dim the re-emerging rays of the indigenous Gadaa democracy, only hardens our position to seek self-determination.

Ethiopia is ostensibly a Federal system with the Regional States supposed to have a decentralized power granted by the Constitution, which allows the States to remain independent in their internal affairs. Regrettably, all authority has been centralized illegitimately and consolidated by the single party ruling class that forcibly eliminated all other political contenders at the State level to facilitate an absolute power of a single party and rule of a single person centrally. The word "federal" is for adorning letterheads only, while tyranny and dictatorship remain the system's hallmarks. No, there is no functioning federalism, and that the empire better stop fooling its people and the international community. The Federal government's leading role in the massacre of the Karrayyuu Oromo leaders not only blurs the jurisdiction line but completely erases it, a severe blow to federalism, a potential trigger for the country's disintegration along the ethnic fault line.

The Karrayyuu Oromos have been victims of the Amhara expansionist terror attacks for many years. Crossing the Oromia Regional State border and penetrating at least 45 km deep, the Amhara evicted the Karrayyuu Oromo following repeated deadly incursions. Why is the Oromia Regional State indifferent about this unlawful, violent land grab and unspeakable atrocity committed against the Oromo people by the expansionist neighbouring Amhara State? Why does the federal government turn a blind eye to this heinous crime perpetrated against this innocent peace-loving community? It is a piece of solid evidence that federalism exists only on paper, and both levels of government act as criminal partners with one sinister goal, denying the Oromo people their inherent human rights and inalienable right to their ancestral lands. Given this untenable situation, taking a relationship break could be the smartest choice to make for both parties before more bloodshed and destruction occur. But, how can that be when the government arms the Amhara terrorist tugs known as *Fanno*, who cross the border indiscriminately killing Oromos, looting and destroying their properties, thus exposing the population to famine and incalculable destitution? How can that be when the government is unwilling to negotiate with Oromo leaders, but continue to kill, imprison and torture them ?

A few months ago, the Oromo Abbaa Gadaa Union (an indigenous socio-political institution that includes the Karrayyuu leaders) bestowed on Abiy Ahmed its highest formal civilian recognition. Yet, Abiy Ahmed, in his characteristic style of betrayal of the Oromo nation, did not seek justice for the Karrayyuu community leaders. He never misses the opportunity to shoot a dagger at our hearts. He has no secret of his hatred for Oromos, which made him a political heartthrob among the right-wing Amhara elites and their orthodox Christian zealots, who openly rejoice in such atrocities against Oromos. As an adept manipulator and narcissist, he is obsessed with one-sided loyalty expecting Oromos to bend over backwards for him while he gives little to nothing in return.

By any definition, democracy involves a government in which the supreme power is vested in the people and exercised by them directly or indirectly through a system of representation usually involving periodically held free elections (*Democracy Definition & Meaning - Merriam-Webster*). But, really, is supreme power vested in the people in Ethiopia? Has it ever been, or even better, will it ever be? Unfortunately, the answer to all these pivotal questions is a resounding no. Not in a country where the government indiscriminately kills, rapes, burns homes and loots its citizens as a punishment for seeking justice, fairness and exercising their fundamental human rights. In a country where certain dominant ethnic elites with control over the media and public purse fight tooth and nail to prevent the triumph of the rule of law and justice, can one ever think of democracy coming to Ethiopia even as a remote possibility?

The savagery and cowardice of the Ethiopian government in the cold-blooded massacre of the Karrayyuu community leaders is a barbaric act of sending terror shock waves through the Oromo nation's spines. It did anger us but did not and will not break us, nor will it help the government achieve its sinister objectives of forcing us into submission. On the contrary, it has made us more steadfast, resilient, resolute, and more determined to re-evaluate our socio-political situation and the meaning of life under tyranny imposed on us by our sworn enemies. Do any peace-loving and fair-minded people on the side of justice ever question why an armed struggle is fast spreading throughout Oromia to restore justice in Oromia? Of course, no. Who should Oromos turn to when their presumed government terrorizes them with the most inhumane acts of barbarism and cruelty? Needless to say, to their young men and women who are standing up against the tyranny and paying sacrifice with their lives to restore dignified living for Oromos on their ancestral lands in Oromia.

We pledge to continue holding the Ethiopian government's feet to the fire for killing these innocent and immensely respected Karrayyuu community leaders. Nothing has devastated Oromos more than killing these innocent people since Haacaaluu Hundeessaa's assassination. We shall never relent, neither shall we tire in seeking to bring the perpetrators to justice. We know this lawless government can never serve justice under any circumstance. Because of that, we once more renew our vow to support those whose mission is to restore the Gadaa inspired Oromo social justice and emancipation.

As a self-respecting nation, Oromia shall not continue as a consenting partner of a murderous regime and an empire that is quickly losing its relevance and on the verge of total disintegration under the weight of a myriad of irreconcilable internal conflicts it perversely created. Ethiopia has proven beyond a scintilla of doubts that it cannot solve its internal disputes and conflicts between the neighbouring Regional States peacefully and has resorted to violent suppression of freedom of thought, democracy, and Federation, as indicated by the extreme measures it has taken, such as the massacre of the Karrayyuu community leaders. The current untenable political action the government is pursuing, forcibly revoking the constitutional protection of the rights of nations, nationalities and peoples, will lead Ethiopia down a slippery slope to ruin. The broad daylight massacre of the Karrayyuu leaders, the tactical elimination of Oromo opposition parties during the recent hollow election, and the exclusion of Oromo representatives from the so-called National Dialogue in progress indicate the depth and breadth with which Ethiopia rejects Oromos.

Merriam-Webster defines a republic as "a government in which supreme power resides in a body of citizens entitled to vote and is exercised by elected officers and representatives responsible to them and governing according to the law." Is Ethiopia a republic? It is a joke of the century.

How could a land believed to be the origin of humanity become such a God-forsaken country, a land of perpetual famine, poverty, a land of the misery of biblical proportion and extraordinary brutality? Because Ethiopia, right from its inception, up to now, is governed by law-less goons whose *raison d'être* is the elimination of any political contenders to hang to the power of luxury, at all cost, with no regard to the plight of the occupied populations for democracy, fundamental justice and shot at a dignified life.

This God-forsaken country, boasting 3000 years of civilization, doesn't get the slightest clue what the meaning of civilization is, nor does it understand what the three words in its name—Federal, Democratic and Republic—stand for or represent, singularly or in any combination. All government bodies, military and civil, even the religious institutions, particularly the orthodox, including higher education institutions, spend the country's meagre resources manufacturing falsehoods to keep the fascistic regime in power in perpetuity. Ethiopia cannot fool anyone anymore in the entire global community but itself.

Ethiopia's main trouble is its rulers' mentality of keeping the colonial empire together by any means; instead of accepting, respecting and practically implementing the right of nations to determine the future of the empire freely and democratically, through popular decision (referendum). Thus, the only solution to the over century old cycles of crises and miseries in Ethiopia is to negotiate and establish a peaceful path to practical implementation of the peoples' right to self-determination. The type of "National Dialogue" the government is trumpeting now, where the architect is the lawless and illegitimate Abiy Ahmed's government will never be able to bring peace and tranquillity to the region, nor justice for the Karrayyuu Oromos.

The right-wing orthodox fundamentalist Amhara supremacists have put up insurmountable roadblocks making coexistence with other nations, nationalities and peoples untenable. The relentless call by the Amhara supremacists to destroy the Constitution and tear up the Federation and national flag violently, without seeking the required consent from the other nations and the more than favourable pondering of Abiy Ahmed's government to go along is undoubtedly going to be the last nail in the coffin. Hence, Ethiopia's true triumph may come if and only if it can run up against the barriers put in her path by these intransigent people.

Given that this roadblock to coexistence is imposed on us, Oromos have no choice but to take it as an opportunity, for it will amazingly put us closer to emancipation than we believe. There are no humanely logical reasons compelling a socio-political coexistence when one party perpetually fights tooth and nail to destroy the bridge; yet, the other party struggles to prop it. The opportunity for peaceful coexistence has not only eroded but entirely eviscerated by the Amhara elites' and high-level federal and regional officials' intense, deep-rooted animosity, heightened and unbridled hate speech dehumanizing the Oromo people.

The killing of the Karrayyuu leaders is the epitome of destroying the gains all non-Amhara populations in Ethiopia, including the Oromo, made through the provision of the Federal constitution. It is a vacuous dream to hope that the perpetrators of this crime, all known by name, position and associations will ever be brought to face justice in Abiy's Ethiopia. Does Oromia have to be forced to live in a union that does not allow the justice of any sort for her people, and at what cost? In Ethiopia, where political assassination is rampant, it is exclusively the government that is the culprit, unlike in many countries where, in reality, the opposition kills members or associates of the governing party. That is why high-profile assassinations such as that of Haacaaluu Hundeessaa and the Karrayyuu Oromo community leaders go uninvestigated to a significant depth.

We stand against the coercive and manipulative manners in which the Neftegna elites, calling themselves "Ethiopianist Force," conduct themselves to maintain their century and a half long power grip and the unbridled greed that has made them the rare breed of religious zealots of the arrogant political right, dominant business owners who are the shakers and movers of the current Ethiopian politics of open genocide against the people of Oromia, Tigray, Benishangul-Gumuz, Kimant, Agaw, etc. The Ethiopianists' unflinching public display of hatred for all freedom seeking nations, nationalities and peoples in Ethiopia, and their debilitating fear of democracy have resulted in catastrophic outcomes. The invasion and forcible eviction of the Oromo Karrayyuu from their ancestral land by the Amhara and the indifference of both the Regional and Federal governments (both belonging to the same fascistic Prosperity Party) is one of the thousands of Abiy Ahmed's plots to punish any sector of society that does not conform or surrender its rights.

In conclusion, we, members of the Oromia Global Forum (OGF) from around the globe, call upon all Oromos to stand shoulder-to-shoulder to defend the sovereign rights of Oromia and demand that justice be served for the Karrayyuu Oromo massacre.

We support all types of Oromo struggles and forces that have shown an unwavering stand in defending the fundamental rights of Oromia, and those who are fighting to restore Gadaa-style law and order that all our citizens deserve.

We demand the international community to see the Abiy Ahmed government's genocidal policy for what it is and refrain from propping it, both financially and diplomatically, until it abandons its war on Oromia, Tigray, Benishangul-Gumuz, Kiman, Agaw, etc, and release all political prisoners, unconditionally.