



Oromia Global Forum

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Congresswoman Betty McCollum
2256 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515
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Dear Honorable Representative Betty McCollum,

I hope this letter finds you and your family in good health in this time of the COVID-19 pandemic.

I am contacting you to seek your help in regards to H. Res. 445, “Condemning all violence and human rights abuses in Ethiopia...”. This resolution was marked up in the House Foreign Relations Committee meeting on 10/21/2021 during which [Representative Karen Bass’ proposed amendments](#) were “Ordered to be Reported in the Nature of a Substitute (Amended)”.

We, members of The Oromia Global Forum ([OGF](#)), a coalition of Oromo civic, professional, and faith-based organizations spanning the globe, welcome the amendments but have grave concerns about them for various reasons.

First, the resolution is narrowly focused on the conflict in northern Ethiopia while ignoring equally serious problems faced by all parts of the country. For instance, human rights violations by government forces, Amhara militias, and Eritrean forces in the Oromia and Beni Shangul-Gumuz regional states causing serious [Internal displacements](#) are not mentioned. Secondly, it makes no mention of Ethiopia’s June 2021 [flawed elections](#) with leading opposition figures behind bars. Thirdly, the Resolution erroneously uses the pejorative alias (OLA-“Shane”) that the Ethiopian government and the Amhara elite employ to demean Oromo Liberation Army (OLA), and to misinform and confuse the public while there is no organization that officially or informally identifies itself as OLA-“Shane” in Ethiopia.

Consequently, we respectfully ask, and would greatly appreciate it if, your good office would consider offering the following proposed amendments to the resolution at the next available opportunity.

Our proposed amendments are:

Whereas credible human rights organizations have reported [acts of violence and human rights abuses](#) committed by members of the Ethiopian government and security forces in Western and Southern Oromia and other southern regions of Ethiopia, including the summary execution of [a 17 -year-old-boy](#) in May 2021, resulting in war crimes, human rights violations and crimes against humanity.

Whereas Oromo pop star Hachalu Hundesa was murdered on the evening of June 29, 2020, in Addis Ababa, following which the government [targeted political opposition leaders](#) and protesters, including Jawar Mohammed (a former resident of Minnesota) and Bekele Gerba, for arrests without due process of the law over which several Members of Congress wrote a [letter](#) to then-Secretary of State Pompeo in August 2020, expressing their grave concerns.

Whereas the government regularly shuts down internet and phone services significantly restricting [Freedom of expression](#) in the Oromia region that is placed under a command post contributing to factors causing famine and hindering relief efforts in parts of Oromia.

Whereas Oromo political parties have claimed that the Government of Ethiopia restricted their right to peacefully assemble and organize in the lead up to the general elections of June 2021, citing the detention and harassment of local candidates and supporters, and efforts to prevent them from opening local offices, and the continued detention of opposition leaders since the summer of 2020, with varying degrees of due process violations and procedural delays in their trials.

That the House of Representatives -

Calls for a credible and all-inclusive national dialogue among all stakeholders, regardless of whether they are waging armed struggle or not.

Urges the UN-led investigation to not be limited to northern Ethiopia but should extend to the Oromia region where [human rights violations and atrocities](#) are being committed by Ethiopian National Defense Forces (ENDF), Oromia police, and the [Amhara regional militia](#).

Calls for immediate and verifiable removal of the Amhara militias and irregular forces who are carrying out atrocities in Wollega, Oromia, and Metekel in Benishangul-Gumuz regional states, and calls for accountability for war crimes and atrocities committed on civilians in both regions.

Calls for an immediate cessation of hostilities in Oromia and Benishangul-Gumuz, and removal of Ethiopian military forces and Amhara militia from the regional states.

Sincerely,

Jemal Ebrahim M Sadik
Executive Director, OGF

Enclosure

cc: Congresswoman Karen Bass