

Statement by worldwide Oromo Civic, Professional, Advocacy, Human Rights, and Community organizations regarding the establishment of a National Dialogue Commission (NDC) in Ethiopia

January 21, 2022

We, the undersigned organizations, are closely following the preparations by the government of Ethiopia to launch a national dialogue process to facilitate consultations among various stakeholders on fundamental national issues.

The government has unilaterally adopted the proclamation establishing a Commission for National Dialogue with unclear parameters. It is currently in the process of selecting Commissioners to lead the NDC without transparent procedures or adequate consultations with key stakeholders and supporters.

While we welcome the release of a few political prisoners, we note that many thousands remain in detention. We hope that this initial move indicates that the ruling party intends to release all remaining political prisoners and is willing to participate in deliberations in good faith.

However, the Ethiopian government is not an impartial, independent body positioned to establish a commission capable of serving as a neutral convener, an essential requisite for a successful inclusive national dialogue.

Therefore, reiterating our August 18, 2021 statement, which called for a comprehensive ceasefire and inclusive dialogue to chart a peaceful path for resolving the country's multifaceted political crises, the signatories below make the following key recommendations:

1. Immediate cessation of hostilities followed by comprehensive ceasefire agreements between the federal government forces and all armed groups in Oromia, Tigray, Benishangul Gumuz, Amhara, and Afar regional states to create a conducive environment for an all-inclusive political dialogue.
2. Unconditional and unimpeded provision of humanitarian assistance, including food and medicine, to all communities affected by conflict—now met with drought-induced starvation — and the re-establishment of vital services, including banking, telecom, transportation, and electricity, to millions of Ethiopians in Oromia, Tigray, Benishangul Gumuz, Afar, Amhara, and Somali regional states.
3. Immediate and unconditional release of all remaining political detainees, including leaders of the Oromo Liberation Front (OLF); its Chairman who has been under house arrest since May 2021; thousands of Oromo youth in detention centers and all other detainees incarcerated in the ethnically-targeted crackdown under the state of emergency.
4. The withdrawal of all foreign forces from Ethiopia, particularly Eritrean security, military, and intelligence units to pave the way for all countries in the region and Ethiopia's bilateral

partners to play a constructive role in ending the humanitarian siege and ongoing civil wars.

5. The commencement of an independent, impartial commission to facilitate an all-inclusive, participatory and transparent national dialogue overseen by conveners who are acceptable to all stakeholders. We call upon the international community to extend its support to such a nonpartisan body and process because the government sponsored NDC cannot credibly shoulder the important and historic responsibility.
6. A careful sequencing of the various stages and elements of the national dialogue process to build confidence and create a conducive peaceful environment for a genuine consultative process. This would require the government to open up the political space in Oromia and beyond in order to accommodate free media, grassroots discussions, and deliberations with all citizens. To this end, we reiterate our call for broader and proactive consultation with all stakeholders on the venue, timetable, convener, pace, conduct, coverage and implementation of agreements reached among parties to the deliberations.

We, the undersigned Oromo Civic, Professional, Advocacy, Human Rights, and Community organizations, therefore urge the government and all stakeholders in Ethiopia, as well as the international community, including the United Nations, United States, China, the European Union and its member states, the African Union and its member states, the United Arab Emirates, Turkey, and Iran to take the appropriate steps to ensure a halt to hostilities in all regions of Ethiopia and also ensure that the dialogue process is impartial, inclusive and participatory.

Signatories

SIGNATORIES OF THE STATEMENT REGARDING THE ESTABLISHMENT OF NATIONAL DIALOGUE COMMISSION

CIVIC, PROFESSIONAL, ADVOCACY, HUMAN RIGHTS ORGANIZATIONS

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Jabdu: Oromo American Women's Council
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Macha Tulama Association
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Oromia Support Group*
Malvern, UK and Melbourne, Australia

Oromo Advocacy Alliance
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Oromo Diaspora Association
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COMMUNITY ASSOCIATIONS

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Oromo Community of **DMV (Washington, DC, Maryland and Virginia)**

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Oromo Community of **Colorado**, Denver

Oromo Community of **Las Vegas**, Inc.

Oromo Community of **Memphis**, Tennessee

Oromo Community of **Kentucky**, Louisville.

Oromo Community of **Tampa Bay**, Florida

Oromo Community of **Jacksonville**, Florida

Oromo Community of **Seattle**, Washington

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