

# **THE OROMO MOVEMENT: THE EFFECTS OF STATE TERRORISM AND GLOBALIZATION IN OROMIA AND ETHIOPIA**

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The Oromo movement is engaging in struggle to empower the Oromo people in order to restore their control on their economic resources such as land and cultural resources and to overcome the effects of Ethiopian state terrorism and globalization. The Oromo people were colonized and incorporated into Abyssinia, present Ethiopia, and the capitalist world system during the "Scramble for Africa" by the alliance of Ethiopian colonialism and European imperialism. This colonization involved terrorism and genocide in order to transfer Oromo economic resources, mainly land, through destroying Oromo leadership and the cultural foundation of the Oromo society. The Oromo resistance that started with the colonization of the Oromo was transformed into the anti-colonial movement in the 1960s and still continues in various forms. On their part, successive colonial Ethiopian governments have been using various forms of violence to destroy the Oromo struggle for national self-determination and democracy. Starting in 1992, the Tigrayan-led Ethiopian government has been imposing state terrorism, genocide, and political repression, with the assistance of big powers and international institutions on the Oromo, the largest ethno-national group, and other groups in order to destroy the Oromo national movement led by the Oromo Liberation Front (OLF) and to dominate the political economy of Oromia (the Oromo country) and Ethiopia in order to transfer economic resources, particularly land, to Tigrayan state elites and their domestic and international supporters.

This paper first provides the historical background for these complex issues. Second, it outlines theoretical and methodological approaches of the paper. Third, the piece explains the role of big powers in supporting the Ethiopian state at the cost of democracy and human rights in order to promote "savage development" (Quan 2013) or "violent development" (Rajagopal 2003) in this age of globalization. This section also explores how the Tigrayan-led Ethiopian government and its international supporters are using the discourses of democracy, human rights, and economic development while terrorizing the Oromo and other indigenous peoples by dispossessing them of their rights and their ancestral land and natural resources. Fourth, it explains how the ongoing peaceful Oromo mass protest movement has emerged in Oromia, how and why the regime is violently cracking down on protestors, including Oromo school children and university students, farmers, and other sectors of the Oromo society, and why the West is facing a political dilemma regarding supporting a government that is openly massacring peaceful protestors and violently repressing dissent. Finally, the piece explores the larger political and economic consequences of the Oromo protest movement in bringing about a fundamental transformation to the political economy of Oromia and Ethiopia.

## **Background**

The Ethiopian colonial terrorism and genocide that started during the last decades of the nineteenth century with the assistance of England, France, and Italy still continue in the 21<sup>st</sup> century with the support of global powers (Jalata 2010). During Ethiopian (Amhara-Tigray) colonial expansion, Oromia, "the charming Oromo land, [would] be ploughed by the iron and the fire; flooded with blood and the orgy of pillage" (de Salviac 2005 [1901]: 349).

Martial de Salviac (2005 [1901]: 349) called this event “the theatre of a great massacre.” The Oromo oral story also testifies that the Abyssinian armies destroyed and looted the resources of Oromia and committed genocide on the Oromo people and others through terrorism, slavery, depopulation, cutting hands or breasts, and creating a series of famines and diseases during and after the colonization of Oromia. According to Martial de Salviac 2005 ([1901]: 8), “With equal arms, the Abyssinia [would] never [conquer] an inch of [Oromo] land. With the power of firearms imported from Europe, Menelik [Abyssinian warlord] began a murderous revenge.”

The colonization of Oromia involved human tragedy and destruction: “The Abyssinian, in bloody raids, operated by surprise, mowed down without pity, in the country of the Oromo population, a mournful harvest of slaves for which the Muslims were thirsty and whom they bought at very high price. An Oromo child [boy] would cost up to 800 francs in Cairo; an Oromo girl would well be worth two thousand francs in Constantinople” (de Salviac 2005 [1901]: 28). The Abyssinian/Ethiopian government massacred half of the Oromo population (5 million out of 10 million) and their leadership during its colonial expansion (Bulatovich 2000: 68). The Amhara warlord, Menelik, terrorized and colonized the Oromo and others to obtain commodities such as gold, ivory, coffee, musk, hides and skins, slaves and lands. Menelik controlled slave trade (an estimated 25,000 slaves per year in the 1880s); with his wife he owned 70,000 enslaved Africans; he became one of the richest capitalists. He invested in American Railway Stock; “Today the Abyssinian ruler had extended the range of his financial operations to the United States, and is a heavy investor in American railroads . . . with his American securities and his French and Belgian mining investments, Menelik has a private fortune estimated at no less than twenty-five million dollars.” (New York Times, November 7, 1909).

The destruction of Oromo lives and institutions were aspects of Ethiopian colonial terrorism. The surviving Oromo who used to enjoy an egalitarian democracy known as the *gadaa* system ((Legesse 1973; 2006) were forced to face state terrorism, genocide, political repression, and an impoverished life. Alexander Bulatovich (2000: 68) explains about the *gadaa* administration: “The peaceful free way of life, which could have become the ideal for philosophers and writers of the eighteenth century, if they had known it, was completely changed. Their peaceful way of life is broken; freedom is lost; and the independent, freedom loving [Oromo] find themselves under the severe authority of the Abyssinian conquerors.” The Ethiopian colonialists also destroyed Oromia’s natural resources and beauty. Oromia was “an oasis luxuriant with large trees” and known for its “opulent and dark greenery used to shoot up from the soil” (de Salviac 2005 [1901]: 21–22). The colonialists devastated “the forests by pulling from it the laths for their houses and [made] campfires or firewood for their dwellings.” Bulatovich (2000: 21) applied to Oromia the phrase “flowing in milk and honey” to indicate its abundance of wealth in cattle and honey before and during its colonization.

The Ethiopian colonial state gradually established settler colonialism and developed five major types of colonial institutions, namely, slavery, the colonial landholding system, the *nafxanya-gabbar* system (semi-slavery), the Oromo collaborative class, and garrison and non-garrison cities (Jalata 2005 [1993]). It introduced the process of forced recruitment of labor via slavery and semi-slavery (Holcomb and Ibssa 1990: 135). The Haile Selassie government consolidated these institutions and practices between the 1930s and 1970s. Furthermore, the military regime that emerged in 1974 under the leadership Colonel Mengistu Haile Mariam continued state terrorism, dictatorship, and Ethiopian colonial policies. When Oromo activists and citizens started to resist the military regime, it intensified its state terrorism and political repression. The military regime had committed massive human rights violations in the 1970s and 1980s in the name of the so-called

Revolution with the assistance of the so-called socialist countries such as the former Soviet Union and its satellite countries. As Norman J. Singer (1978: 672–673) notes, those who were killed during the initial three months of “the campaign of the ‘ Terror’ . . . numbered around 4000–5000 in Addis Ababa alone; the killings continued in March 1978, spreading to the rest of the country . . . Those detained for political instruction numbered from 30,000 upwards . . . Torture methods . . . included severe beating on the head, soles of the feet . . . and shoulders, with the victim hung by the wrists or suspended by wrists and feet from a horizontal bar . . . sexual torture of boys and girls, including pushing bottles or red-hot iron bars into girls’ vaginas and other cruel methods.”

In 1980, one Oromo source said, “The Oromo constitutes the majority of the more than two million prisoners that glut Ethiopia’s jails today” (The Oromo Relief Association 1980: 30). In the 1980s, thousands of Oromo activists or nationalists were murdered or imprisoned; the regime also terrorized Oromo farmers and students. The military government terrorized the Oromo population by holding mass shooting and burying them with bulldozers: “Over years this procedure was repeated several times. When the method did not work and the Oromo population could not be forced into submission, other methods were used. The victims were made to lie down with their heads on stone, and their skulls were smashed with another stone . . . . When the Oromo movement could not be quenched by shooting or by the smashing of skulls, [the government] came up with a new idea. Men’s testicles were smashed between a hammer and an anvil, ” Gunnar Hasselblatt (1992: 17–19) writes. As explained below, Ethiopia has maintained its terrorism and oppressive and repressive structures on the Oromo and other colonized peoples by the assistance of successive global powers, namely, Great Britain, the United States, the former Soviet Union, and China. Before continuing the analysis, the introduction of the theoretical and methodological approaches is needed.

### **Theoretical and Methodological Considerations**

This work draws from an analytical framework that emerges from theories of the world system, globalization, nationalism, and social movements. It combines a structural approach to global social change such as globalization, neoliberalism and capital accumulation with a social constructionist model of human agency of the Oromo social movement. In this era of neoliberal globalization, in the name of democracy, development, and human rights the Ethiopian state and its global supporters are engaging in dispossessing land and other resources of the Oromo and that of others while repressing and terrorizing civil societies and their social movements, particularly that of the Oromo. A few scholars, who have understood these contradictory processes, see the capitalist/socialist development as the process of violence or call it savage development. Balakrishnan Rajagopal (2003: 3) explains how “in large part due to the realization among social movements and progressive intellectual that it is not the lack of development that caused poverty, inflicted violence, and engaged in destruction of nature and livelihood; rather it is the very process of bringing development [to indigenous peoples] that has caused them in the first place.”

Claiming that they promote development, the Ethiopian colonial state, big powers, and global institutions such the World Bank and the International Money Fund are joined in implementing the policies that massively violate the human rights of indigenous peoples such as the dispossession of land and forced resettlements by destroying livelihoods and cultures (Oakland Institute 2013, 2014, 2015; Amnesty International 2014, 2015). Adequately understanding these complex and contradictory conditions requires employing critical approaches, interdisciplinary, multidimensional, and comparative methods to examine the dynamic interplay among repressive political structures and human agency. This study also requires critical social history that looks at societal issues from the bottom

up, specifically critical discourses and the particular world system approach that deal with long-term and large-scale global social changes. Furthermore, serious attention is given to the role of the Oromo social movement in resisting the globally and regionally imposed colonialism and neoliberalism and their associated structures and policies and in promoting an alternative option of development, self-determination, and egalitarian multinational democracy.

The critical understanding of the essence of global capitalism and its political structures and injustices are necessary to clearly recognize the principles for which the national struggle of the Oromo has developed. The Oromo have been denied basic aspects of their humanity since they were forced to enter into the global capitalist world system via slavery and colonialism that were facilitated by the alliance of Ethiopian dependent colonialism and global imperialism (Holcomb and Ibssa 1990; Jalata 2005). The capitalist world powers and their regional or local collaborators used superior military forces to enslave and colonize pre-capitalist societies in order to exploit their labor power and/or to dispossess their economic resources through coercion, terrorism, looting, piracy, genocide, annexation, and continued subjugation. The development of global capitalism and the accumulation and concentration of capital or economic resources through the separation of the actual producers from their means of production such as land led to the racialization/ethnicization and socialization of labor (Marx 1967: 17). The process of expropriation of land, racial slavery, and settler colonialism resulted in the total or partial destruction of indigenous peoples such as indigenous Americans, Australians and others (Jalata 2011) and or hierarchical organization of world populations through the creation of an elaborate discourse of race or racism.

As the meaning of race is illusive and complex, so is that of racism. Race and racism are socio-political constructs since all human groups are biologically and genetically more alike than different (Malik 1996). To justify slavery, colonialism, colonial terrorism, genocide, the ideology of racism was developed in scientific and religious clothing and matured during the last decades of the 19<sup>th</sup> and the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. National or social movements of the colonized and subjugated peoples have been challenging these ideologies and practices in various forms, but they could not totally stop them. The more things changed, the more they remained the same. Mainstream scholarship and even opposition one ignore or superficially address the impact of capitalist or socialist development on indigenous peoples. Since the 1970s, with the intensification of the crisis of the process of capital accumulation and the declining of the US hegemony in the capitalist world system, the West under the leadership of the US has started to promote a policy known as neoliberalism to revitalize global capital accumulation (Harvey 2005). Through the policy of neoliberalism the neo-liberal state has intensified the process of capital accumulation by dispossession of economic resources and rights; the “fundamental mission [of the neo-liberal stat] was to facilitate conditions for profitable capital accumulation on the part of both domestic and foreign capital” (Harvey 2005: 7). In the name of development, neoliberal globalization has continued state terrorism and massive human rights violations that started during direct colonialism: “Over the last fifty years, millions have been uprooted from their homelands, communities have been destroyed, and the environment has been desecrated in the process of transforming ‘traditional’ or ‘peasant’ economies into ‘modern’ economies. Many more millions have been the subject of state and private violence in the name of modernization and development” (Rajagopal 1999: 16)

Accumulation of capital by dispossession involves state terrorism and genocide as the case of the Oromo illustrates (Jalata 2011). State terrorism is a systematic governmental policy in which massive violence is practiced on a given population group with the goal of eliminating any behavior which promotes political struggle or resistance by members of

that group. The main assumptions of such a state are that it can control the population by destroying their leaders and their culture of resistance. States that fail to establish ideological hegemony and political orders are unstable and insecure; hence, they engage in state terrorism (Oliverio, 1997: 48-63). Bruce Hoffman (2006: 40) “defines terrorism as the deliberate creation and exploitation of fear through violence or the threat of violence in the pursuit of political change . . . . Terrorism is specifically designed to have far-reaching psychological effects beyond the immediate victim(s) or object of the terrorist attack.” Although the struggle of the Oromo and other peoples forced the Ethiopian colonial state to “nationalize” the land and make it “collective property” between 1975 and 1991, the United States supported the emergence of the Tigryan-led Ethiopian government that has intensified state terrorism, genocide, and capital accumulation by dispossessing the land of Oromo farmers and that of other ethnonational groups Ethiopia (Jalata 2005).

Both the Ethiopian colonial state and the big powers of the capitalist world system as well as China have allied in intensifying capital accumulation, including land dispossession, by any means necessary. “The process of integration of neocolonial states into the global economy, seeking the protection of the imperial state,” Berch Berberoglu (2003: 108) writes, “has been to a large degree a reaction to a perceived threat to the survival of capitalism in the Third World—one that is becoming a grave concern for both imperialism and the local repressive capitalist states.” As the Oromo national movement has continued to resist the criminal policies of the Ethiopian government, the regime has increased its terrorist activities and dispossession of land and other resources with the support of Western powers, emerging powers of China, India, and some Arab countries, as well as international institutions such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. Since the international system, particularly the United Nations, lacks a single standard for humanity in a practical sense, states such as that of Ethiopia get away with the crimes they commit against their own citizens and other peoples (Jalata 2011).

The lack of demanding responsibility from certain states such as that of Ethiopia in the international system leaves a room for engaging in state terrorism and committing genocide. Despite the fact that the United Nations theoretically recognizes the problems of state terrorism and genocide, it did not yet develop effective policies and mechanisms of preventing them because powerful countries and their client states that commit such crimes against humanity have dominated this international body. Article II of the United Nations Convention defines genocide as “acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group.” Kurt Jonassohn (1998: 9) also defines genocide as the planned destruction of any economic, political or social group.” “GENOCIDE is a form of one-sided mass killing in which a state or other authority intends to destroy a group, as that and membership in it are defined by the perpetrator,” Frank Chalk and Kurt Jonassohn (1990: 23) define. Chalk and Jonassohn (1990: 23) identify two major types of genocide: the first type is used to colonize and maintain an empire by terrorizing the people perceived to be real or potential enemies. In this case, the main purpose of practicing genocide is to acquire land and other valuable resources. Then the maintenance of colonial domination by state elites requires the establishment of a cultural and ideological hegemony that can be practiced through repression and genocidal massacres. By destroying elements of a population that resists colonial domination, hegemony can be established on the surviving population. This is the second type of genocide; this form of genocide is called ideological genocide. Jonassohn (1998: 23) notes that ideological genocide develops “in nation-states where ethnonational groups develop chauvinistic [and racist] ideas about their superiority and exclusiveness.” As further demonstrated above, since their incorporation into the racialized capitalist world system through Ethiopian dependent colonialism, the Oromo and other peoples have been facing state terrorism, genocidal

massacres, and dispossession of economic and cultural resources that they have been fighting against in various forms.

### **Global Powers and the Neocolonial Ethiopian State**

Since the mid-twentieth century, the US government as the hegemonic power of the capitalist world system has supported and protect the neocolonial Ethiopian state, except between 1977 and 1991, at the cost of the colonized ethnonational groups such as the Oromo. Between the early 1950s and the 1970s, the US introduced its “modernization” programs to the Ethiopian Empire and supported the Haile Selassie government. Several scholars demonstrated that the US foreign policy toward Oromia and Ethiopia consolidated the racial/ethnonational hierarchy that was formed by the alliance of Ethiopian colonialism and European imperialism (Holcomb and Ibssa 1990). When the Haile Selassie government was overthrown by the popular revolt of 1974, a military dictatorship emerged and allied with the former Soviet Union until 1991, when it was overthrown. With the support of the former Soviet Union, the military regime protected and extended the interests of the colonial settlers in Oromia and other colonized regions. Ethiopia maintained its neocolonial status in the global order with the help of British global hegemonism until the US inherited this role in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century. Despite the fact that the US, encouraged decolonization and self-determination in the colonized world in order to gain spheres of influence, it did not care for these issues in the Ethiopian Empire. Since Ethiopia was informal colony of Europe and America, there was no need to address these issues. Because of its interest in the Horn of Africa, the US was receptive to the Ethiopian request and sent a Technical Mission in 1944 to help build the Ethiopian political economy. The Haile Selassie government and its officials effectively used the state bureaucracy and American connections to accumulate wealth and capital just as the US government this ruling class to its strategic and economic advantage in the region. The alliance between the Ethiopian colonialists and the US imperialists emerged strongly in the early 1950s. As the hegemonic power, the US had the responsibility to maintain client states such as that of Ethiopia in the capitalist world economy; between 1946 and 1973, it spent more than \$62 billion worldwide on military assistance programs (U.S. Agency of International Development, 1974: 6). US hegemony was built in the less developed world through military assistance to the ruling classes and their governments (Magdoff, 1970), and the Ethiopian client state was a beneficiary. In fact, the Ethiopian state was mainly interested in dependable security against internal and external forces.

On its part, the US was interested in securing continuing base rights in Asmara, and in developing a major military and monitoring station there. Describing the importance to US strategic interests of a base in the Horn of Africa, Peter Schwab (1979: 91) says that the region is “Close to the Middle East and the Indian Ocean, it flanks the oil-rich states of Arabia, controls the Babel Mandeb Straits, one of the narrow arteries of Israel’s lifeline . . . dominates an area of the Gulf of Aden and of the Indian Ocean through which oil tankers are constantly moving, and overlooks the passage at which the Red Sea, the Gulf of Aden, and the Indian Ocean converge. It is a major geopolitical area of the world.” As part of its global strategy to maintain hegemony in the capitalist world economy and to prevent the influence of the Soviet Union, the US sought to dominate this part of Africa. The US also considered “its political investment in Ethiopia as an investment toward the future realization of its wider interests in Africa” (Agyeman- Duah 1984: 209). The defense treaty closely linked Ethiopian colonialism to American hegemonism (Ottaway and Ottaway, 1978: 150). The Americans expanded their Asmara base and modernized the Ethiopian military by training and equipping it with modern weapons.

An American military advisory group replaced the British Military Mission in

Ethiopia. “Between 1951 and 1976 Ethiopia received over \$350 million economic aid from the U.S.A. and a further \$279 million in military aid. In the years 1953-75, 3,552 Ethiopian military personnel were trained in the U.S.A. itself,” Halliday and Molyneux (1981: 215) note. When the British military mission withdrew in 1951, “the Ethiopian army was still only partially organized and poorly trained and equipped. It was under such conditions Haile Selassie turned to the United States for assistance” (Agyeman-Duah, 1984: 110), and he was successful in obtaining US military aid (Schwab, 1979: 92). As the events unfolded in the 1960s—an attempted military coup, the emergence of various anti-colonial movements, and the appearance of a radical student movement—the modernization approach of the US through state-building strategy proved vulnerable. Consequently, the politics of order began to emerge. “The military, in conjunction with other security forces,” Baffour Agyeman-Duah (1984: 179) writes, “became the instrument for social control and counterinsurgency during the turbulent years of the 1960s, and an active American support in all this was by no means limited.”

Despite its claim of democratic ideals, the US helped the Ethiopian colonial regime to stay in power by suppressing the peoples. “The United States sent in counterinsurgent teams, increased its military aid programs, and expanded its modernization and training program for the Ethiopian military. An extensive air force was also created with United States vintage jets” (Schwab, 1979: 95). There is no doubt that the US military and economic assistance had prolonged Haile Selassie’s regime. In the 1960s, the decolonization of British and Italian Somaliland, the Soviet alliance with the newly emerged Somali state, the anti-colonial movements in the empire and internal rivalry within the Ethiopian ruling class had threatened the foundation of the Haile Selassie regime. Harold Marcus (1983: 114) points out that “By forcing Washington continuously to increase its commitments, Addis Ababa made the United States an actor in Ethiopia’s internal politics.” The US alliance with Ethiopia was mainly for strategic and geopolitical reasons, not economic ones, and US business investment was insignificant (Mohammed 1969: 76).

The US modernization programs were both economic and educational. To integrate closely the US-Ethiopian ideological alliance, the Point Four program under the US International Cooperation Administration was extended to Ethiopia in 1952. The stated purpose of this program was to improve the socioeconomic conditions of the less developed world through providing technical and administrative expertise (Luther, 1958: 132). But, in practice, the US was interested mainly in consolidating the Ethiopian ruling class, which had little knowledge of the modern world in technical and administrative fields. The US modernization programs continued in the 1960s and the 1970s. Thousands of Peace Corps volunteers were sent to implement such programs. For almost twenty-six years, the US dispatched its diplomats and intellectuals to apply its modernization principles in building and maintaining the Ethiopian Empire in accord with US national and global interests. With the overthrow the Haile Selassie government the military regime led by Mengistu allied with the former Soviet Union. Consequently, the influence of the US on Ethiopia declined between 1974 and 1991.

### **Neoliberal Globalization, State Terrorism, and Dispossession**

At the end of the 1980s, a structural crisis that manifested itself in national movements, famine, poverty, and internal contradictions within the ruling elite factions eventually weakened the Amhara-dominated military regime and led to its demise in 1991. Using this opportunity, the US government reestablished its relations with the Ethiopian Empire by allying this time with the Tigrayan People’s Liberation Front (TPLF), which emerged from about 7 million Tigrayans. Opposing the Soviet influence in Ethiopia and recognizing that the Amhara-based Ethiopian government had lost credibility, the US started to support the

TPLF in the 1980s and prepared it financially, ideologically, diplomatically, and militarily to replace the Amhara-led military regime by creating the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) from three puppet organizations it created known as the Oromo People's Democratic Organization (OPDO), the Amhara National democratic Movement (ANDM), and the Southern Ethiopia People's Democratic Movement (SEPDM). With the use of Western relief aid and financial support, the TPLF leaders converted the famine-stricken Tigrayan peasants and those militias who were captured at war fronts into guerrilla fighters in the 1980s. The Eritrean People's Liberation Front also played a central role in building the TPLF/EPRDF army.

One of the major reasons why the US government chose the TPLF was that the Tigrayan elites were perceived as a legitimate successor to an Amhara-led government because of the racist assumptions of the West. Another reason was that these elites were ready to be agents of global imperialism in the Horn of Africa at any cost. With the emergence of the Tigrayan-led Ethiopian government in 1991, the US reestablished its hegemony in Ethiopia by claiming that it promotes democracy and human rights. However, the main rationale of US policy makers' involvement in Ethiopia is to maintain political order and to fight against global "terrorism" in the Horn of Africa. Of course, the big powers of the capitalist world system as well as China have allied with the Tigrayan-led Ethiopia government in order to maintain global capitalism through intensifying capital accumulation by any means necessary. "The process of integration of neocolonial states into the global economy, seeking the protection of the imperial state," Berch Berberoglu (2003: 108) writes, "has been to a large degree a reaction to a perceived threat to the survival of capitalism in the Third World—one that is becoming a grave concern for both imperialism and the local repressive capitalist states." The US, the European Union, China and others have built and consolidated the Tigrayan-led Ethiopian regime to perform the following important services: "(1) adopt fiscal and monetary policies that ensure macroeconomic stability; (2) provide the basic infrastructure necessary for global economic activity (airports and seaports, communication networks, educational systems, etc.); and (3) provide social order, that is, stability, which requires sustaining instruments of social control, coercive and ideological apparatus" (Robinson 2008: 33).

The Tigrayan-led regime has become an organ of capital accumulation for Tigrayan and transnational elites, and it uses terrorism and massive human rights violations to separate the indigenous communities such as the Oromo and others from their land and other resources (Jalata 2005). Furthermore, the World Bank, IMF, UN, EU, the African Union, and some NGOs as structures of global capitalism are the facilitators of regional and global capital accumulation, and they are less interested in promoting human rights and democracy in peripheral countries like Ethiopia. The political and military leaders of the Ethiopian government are literally gangsters and robbers; they use state power to expropriate lands and other resources in the name of privatization—all with the supporting and blessing of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. In achieving its political and economic objectives, the regime has been engaging in political repression, state terrorism, genocidal massacres, and gross human rights violations in Oromia and other regional states. Since the Oromo people have been resisting to Tigrayan colonial policies, they have been targeted by the Tigrayan-led Ethiopian regime; they have been also attacked and terrorized because of their economic resources, and their refusal to submit to the orders of Tigrayan authorities and their collaborators.

This regime has banned independent Oromo organizations including the OLF and declared war on this organization and the Oromo people. It even has outlawed Oromo journalists and other writers and closed down Oromo newspapers. "The attack on the free press has literally killed the few publications in the Oromo language in the Latin alphabet.

The death of Oromo publications . . . has been a fatal blow to the flowering of Oromo literature and the standardization of the Oromo language itself. The Oromo magazines that have disappeared include *Gada*, *Biftu*, *Madda Walaabuu*, *Odaa*, and the *Urjii* magazine . . . Since 2002, there has not been a single newspaper or magazine that has expressed the legitimate political opinions of the Oromo in Ethiopia," Mohammed Hassen (2002: 31) asserts. Almost all Oromo journalists are either in prison or killed, or in exile. The regime also banned Oromo musical groups and all professional associations. Expanding their political repression, regional authorities formed quasi-government institutions known as *gott* and *garee* to maintain tighter political control of Oromia; they "imposed these new structures on . . . communities . . . . More disturbing, regional authorities are using the *gott* and *garee* to monitor the speech and personal lives of the rural population, to restrict and control the movements of residents, and to enforce farmers' attendance at 'meetings' that are thinly disguised OPDO political rallies" (Human Rights Watch 2005: 2).

Generally speaking, this government has continued to eliminate or imprison politically conscious and self-respecting Oromo. Today, thousands of Oromo are in official and secret prisons simply because of their nationality and their resistance to injustice. After jailed and released from prison after six years, Seye Abraha, the former Defense Minister of the regime who had previously participated in the massacring and imprisoning thousands of Oromo, testified on January 5, 2008, to his audience in the state of Virginia in the U. S. that "esir betu Oromigna yinager," ("the prison speaks Oromiffa [the Oromo language]") and also noted that "about 99% of the prisoners in Qaliti are Oromos."<sup>1</sup> The Tigrayan state bureaucrats believe that Oromo intellectuals, businessmen and women, conscious Oromo farmers, students, and community and religious leaders are their enemies, and, hence, should be eliminated through terrorism and genocide.<sup>2</sup> The cadres, soldiers, and officials of the regime have frequently raped Oromo girls and women to demoralize them and their communities and to show how Tigrayan rulers and their collaborators wielded limitless power. As Bruna Fossati, Lydia Namarra and Peter Niggli report, "in prison women are often humiliated and mistreated in the most brutal fashion. Torturers ram poles or bottles into their vaginas, connect electrodes to the lips of their vulva, or the victims are dragged into the forest and gang-raped by interrogation officers."<sup>3</sup> State-sanctioned rape is a form of terrorism. The use of sexual violence is also a tactic of genocide that a dominant ethnonational group practices in order to destroy a subordinate ethnonational group. What Catherine MacKinnon (1994: 11-12) says about ethnic cleansing in Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina applies to the sexual abuse of Oromo women by the Tigrayan-led regime: "It is also rape unto death, rape as massacre, rape to kill and to make the victims wish they were dead. It is rape as an instrument of forced exile, rape to make you leave your home and never want to go back. It is rape to be seen and heard and watched and told to others: rape as spectacle. It is rape to drive a wedge through a community, to shatter a society, to destroy a people. It is rape as genocide." The Tigrayan-led regime has used various mechanisms in repressing, controlling and destroying the Oromo people. It has imprisoned or killed thousands of Oromo women and men. Its agents have murdered prominent community leaders and left their corpses for hyenas by denying them burial to impose terror on the Oromo people. Furthermore, relatives of the murdered Oromos are not allowed to cry publicly to express their grievances, a once cultural practice.<sup>4</sup> For instance, in 2007, the regime's militia killed twenty Oromo and left their corpses for hyenas on the mountain of Suufi in Eastern Oromia.<sup>5</sup> According to *Human Rights Watch* (2005: 1-2), "Since 1992, security forces have imprisoned thousands of Oromo on charges of plotting armed insurrection on behalf of the OLF. Such accusations have regularly been used as a transparent pretext to imprison individuals who publicly question government policies or actions. Security forces have tortured many detainees and subjected them to continuing

harassment and abuse for years after their release. That harassment in turn has often destroyed victims' ability to earn a livelihood and isolated them from their communities."

Although it is impossible to know exactly at this time how many Oromo have been murdered by this government, Mohammed Hassen (2001: 30) estimates that between 1992 and 2001, about 50,000 killings and 16,000 disappearances (euphemism for secret killings) took place in Oromia; he also notes that 90 percent of the killings were not reported.<sup>6</sup> The government hides its criminal activities and "does not keep written records of its extrajudicial executions and prolonged detention of political prisoners."<sup>7</sup> Furthermore, the massive killings and genocide committed on the Sheko, Mezhenger, Sidama, Annuak, and Ogaden Somali peoples have shocked some sections of the international community.<sup>8</sup> The president of Genocide Watch, Gregory Stanton (2009), wrote on March 23, 2009, an open letter to the United Nations High Commission for Human Rights admiring the action that the ICC took in issuing a warrant for the arrest of President Omar al-Bashir of the Sudan and calling upon them to investigate the crimes Meles and his government have committed and still are committing against humanity in the Horn of Africa.<sup>9</sup> Stanton demonstrates in this letter how the Tigrayan-led government has committed heinous crimes by being involved "in the inciting, the empowerment or the perpetration of crimes against humanity, war crimes and even genocide, often justified by them as 'counter-insurgency.'"

He also states that the government organized Ethiopian National Defense Forces and civilian militia groups to ruthlessly massacre 424 persons from the Annuak people in Gambella on December 2003 in order to suppress opposition and to "exclude them from any involvement in the drilling for oil on their indigenous land." According to Stanton, as militia groups chanted "Today is the day for killing Annuak," both the military and militias used machetes, axes and guns to kill the unarmed victims, frequently raping the women while chanting, "Now there will be no more Annuak children." Reports from Amnesty International, the US State Department, and the Human Rights Watch have been continuing to list Zenawi's government extensive record of chilling crimes against the politically and economically oppressed peoples such as the Oromo. The Meles regime recently passed the so-called anti-terrorism law to legalize its crimes against humanity and to legally intensify its own repressive and terrorist activities. Ethiopia's anti-terrorism "law could provide the Ethiopian government with a potent instrument to crack down on political dissent, including peaceful political demonstrations and public criticisms of government policy that are deemed supportive of armed opposition activity" (Human Rights Watch 2009: 1). Generally speaking, the policies and practices of the Meles regime have forced millions of Oromo to become political refugees in Asia, Europe, Australia, and North America.

The alliance of the West with this regime has frightened neighboring countries such as Djibouti, Kenya, Sudan, and Yemen, and turned them against the Oromo struggle and Oromo refugees. Using the leverage of Western countries, the Meles regime has pressured neighboring governments to return or expel Oromo refugees from their countries. The United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) has even failed to provide reasonable protection for thousands of Oromo refugees in Djibouti, Kenya, Sudan, Somalia, and Yemen. For example, on December 21 and 22, 2000, while five thousand Oromo refugees were refouled to Ethiopia, the UNHCR office in Djibouti denied any violation of its mandate had occurred (The Oromia Support Group 2002: 17). Between 2000 and 2004, hundreds of Oromo refugees were forced to return to Ethiopia from Djibouti to face imprisonment or death (The Oromia Support Group 2003: 16-18). "The continuing refoulement of refugees from Djibouti," notes the Oromia Support Group 2002: 18-19), "especially the large scale refoulement of December 2000 and the 28 associated deaths by asphyxiation and shooting, should be publicly acknowledged by UNHCR and the Djibouti

government.”<sup>10</sup> The security agents of Ethiopia and neighboring countries still capture thousands of Oromo refugees and return them to Ethiopia.

By crossing borders and entering Somalia and Kenya, agents of the Ethiopian regime assassinated prominent Oromo leaders. And still today, the regime is killing prominent Oromos in Kenya and Somalia. For instance, in 2007 and 2008, Ethiopian security forces assassinated Oromos in Somalia and Kenya. One human rights organization notes that on February 5, 2008, the combined security forces of Ethiopia and Puntland, Somalia, bombed two hotels and consequently murdered 65 Oromo refugees and seriously injured more than 100 people.<sup>11</sup> In 2009, the regime killed four Oromos by poisoning their food in Puntland (Human Rights League 2009). When it comes to the Oromo, international organizations do not pay attention even if terrorist attacks occur and international laws are broken. The Oromo are being denied sanctuary in neighboring countries and are also even being denied the right to be refugees to some degree. Peripheral states such as that of Ethiopia “lack the capacity to meet the demands and rights of citizens and improve the standard of living for the majority of population” (Welsh, 2002: 67-68). Consequently, they engage in state terrorism and genocidal massacres in order to suppress the population groups that struggle for political and economic rights and to dispossess their economic resources. The Tigrayan-led Ethiopian government accepts state violence against the Oromo and others as a legitimate means of establishing political stability and order.

It does this despite its adoption in its constitution the principles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and International Covenants on Human Rights. As Lisa Sharlach (2002: 107) attests, state terrorism and genocide occur when a “dominant group, frightened by what its members perceive as an onslaught of . . . internal movements for democracy and socioeconomic change, harnesses the state apparatus to destroy the subordinate group altogether.” State terrorism is associated with issues of control of territory and resources and the construction of political and ideological domination. Annamarie Oliverio (1997: 52) explains two essential features of state terrorism “First, the state reinforces the use of violence as a viable, effective, mitigating factor for managing conflict; second, such a view is reinforced by culturally constructed and socially organized processes, expressed through symbolic forms, and related in complex ways to present social interests. Within increasing economic and environmental globalization, gender politics, and the resurgence of nationalities within territorial boundaries, the discourse of terrorism, as a practice of statecraft, is crucial to the construction of political boundaries.” The Tigrayan-led regime mainly targets the Oromo because of their economic resources and political resistance. According to “Because the Oromo occupy Ethiopia’s richest areas and comprise half of the population of Ethiopia, they are seen as the greatest threat to the present Tigrayan-led government. Subsequently, any indigenous Oromo organization, including the Oromo Relief Association, has been closed and suppressed by the government. The Standard reason given for detaining Oromo people is that they are suspected of supporting the OLF” (The Oromia Support Group 1997: 1),

The regime’s activities include the systematic assassinations of prominent Oromos, both open and hidden murders of thousands of ordinary Oromo, initiation of villagization and eviction in Oromia, the expansion of prisons in Oromia, and the incarceration of thousands Oromo in hidden and underground concentration camps. Umar Fatanssa, an elderly Oromo, says: “We had never experienced anything like that, not under Haile Selassie, nor under the Mengistu regime: these people just come and shoot your son or your daughter dead in front of your eyes” (quoted in Fossati, Namarra and Niggli, 1996: 43). Ethiopian state terrorism manifests itself in different forms such as war, assassination, murder (including burying people alive, throwing off cliffs, and hanging them), castration, torture, and rape. The police and the army are forcing the Oromo people into submission by

jailing, intimidation, beating, torturing, and killings as well as by confiscating their properties (Pollock, 1996). Former prisoners have testified that their arms and legs were tied tightly together against their backs and that their naked bodies were whipped. Large containers or bottles filled with water were fixed to their testicles, or if they were women, bottles or poles were pushed into their vaginas. Some prisoners have been locked up in empty steel barrels and tormented with heat in the tropical sun during the day and with cold at night. Prisoners have been forced into pits so that fire could be made on top of them. According to Trevor Trueman (2001: 3), “Torture— especially arm-tying, beating of the soles of the feet, suspension of weights from genitalia and mock execution—is commonplace, at least in unofficial places of detention. Female detainees estimate that several soldiers and policemen on several occasions rape 50% of women during detention, often. The Minnesota Center for Victims of Torture has surveyed more than 500 randomly selected Oromo refugees. The majority had been subjected to torture and nearly all of the rest had been subjected to some kind of government violence.”

Unfortunately, the successive U.S. administrations of George Herbert Bush, Bill Clinton, George Walker Bush, and Barack Obama have fully heartedly supported this criminal regime while giving lip service to the promotion of democracy and protection of human rights. The U.S., other Western countries, and China have indirectly financed state terrorism and genocide in Oromia and Ethiopia through bilateral (i.e. governmental institutions) and international institutions such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. The Tigrayan-led Ethiopian regime is now completing the forced removal of Oromo farmers from the areas surrounding Finfinnee (Addis Ababa) (Worku 2008: 97-131). It has tried to implement the so-called Addis Ababa Master Plan that the Oromo called “the Master Genocide” in 2014, and the Oromo in general and the Oromo students in particular have been peacefully resisting this genocidal policy that has been intended to totally uproot Oromo farmers around the capital city and to transfer their lands to Tigrayans colonial elites and their supporters. Furthermore, by evicting the Oromo farmers from their homelands with nominal or without compensation, the regime has already leased several millions hectares of Oromo land to so-called investors from Ethiopia, China, Djibouti, Saudi Arabia, India, Malaysia, Nigeria, UK, Israel, as well as from Europe (Rahmato 2011; Giorgis 2009).

The local and transnational capitalists have intensified the process of capital accumulation by dispossession of the Oromo and others under the leadership of the Tigrayn-led Ethiopian government. If the policy of land grabbing is allowed to continue, Tigrayans, Amharas, Chinese, Djiboutians, Indians, Malaysians, Nigerians, Arabs, English, Jews, Asians, Europeans and others will soon replace the Oromo people in Oromia and beyond. However, the Tigrayan state elites have never sold or leased Tigrayan land, but have expanded modern agricultural and industrial development in their homeland, Tigray. Tamrat G. Giorgis (2009: 1), Addis Fortune staff writer, explains as follows: “A new global trend is rising whereby companies from emerging economies grab vast land in poor host nations to grow and export cereals and grains to their home countries. It has happened here in Bako [Oromia,], where people from India have been granted tens of thousands of hectares of land for commercial farming. The locals, however, are unhappy.” The Tigrayan regime also sells Oromo minerals and other natural resources while evicting and impoverishing the Oromo people. Whenever the Oromo resist, the regime mercilessly brutalizes or kills them. In this era of globalization, the Tigrayan regime is advised, financed, and legitimized by the transnational capitalist class. Global powers such as the US, the European Union, and countries of emerging economies have collaborated with the Tigrayan-led regime to suppress the OLF and the Oromo people in order to expropriate the economic resources of the Oromo people.<sup>12</sup>

Millions of Oromo who have lost their economic resources and those who are targeted for their political views have immigrated to the Middle East, Australia, Europe, and North America and to different countries in Africa. They have been mistreated in some African countries and the Middle East, and they have been denied the right to be refugees. When the Oromo are facing abject poverty and hunger, Tigrayan elite who depended on international food aid in the 1980s for their survival, are rich and powerful today. The regime also sells Oromo minerals, forests, and other natural resources while evicting and impoverishing the Oromo people. Whenever the Oromo resist, the regime mercilessly brutalizes or kills them. Amnesty International (2014: 8) in its paper entitled, "Because I am Oromo," notes, in peaceful opposition to land dispossession and the so-called Integrated Addis Ababa Master Plan, "Between 2011 and 2014, at least 5,000 Oromos have been arrested as a result of their actual or suspected peaceful opposition to the government, based on their manifestation of dissenting opinions, exercise of freedom of expression or their imputed political opinion." In 2014, the regime also massacred over 78 university students in Ambo for peacefully protesting against the so-called Addis Ababa Master Plan.<sup>13</sup>

Large-scale arrests, massive shootings, rapes, tortures, extra-judicial executions, and deaths due to tortures or lack of medical treatments are common events in Oromia. Students were accused of organizing demonstrations and arrested and tortured; singers were detained and tortured for cultivating Oromo nationalism and for not praising the government; people were detained and tortured for not providing false testimonies against other peoples or being accused of supporting the OLF (Amnesty International 2014: 7). The policy of violent development has been also devastating the peoples of the Lower Omo region and Gambella; the ethno-national minority groups, including Kwegu, Bodi, Suri, Mursi, Nyangatom, Hamar, Karo and Dassenach have been targeted for destruction through land dispossession and forced resettlements (Oakland Institute 2013: 1-2; 2013; 2014; 2015). When the US, UK and the World Bank have provide the so-called development aid, the Ethiopian government has used its defense force to violently dispossess the land and other resources of these people and forcing them to settle in new areas that are hostile to their livelihoods and their cultural traditions. Ethiopia received "\$3.5 billion on average from international donors in recent years, which represents 50 to 60 percent of its national budget" in development aid from the US, UK, and the World Bank (Oakland Institute 2013: 1).

The so-called development strategy developed in 2010 aimed at the removing "1.5 million people from areas targeted for industrial plantations under the government's 'villagization' program" (Oakland Institute 2013: 1). The European Union, Australia, Italy, Germany, Irish Aid, the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank Group have also financed the programs of land dispossession and forced resettlement in the Lower Omo region. In these violent development processes of enriching Tigrayan and transnational capitalist elites, "a long list of human rights violations, including, 'arbitrary killings; allegations of torture, beating, abuse, and mistreatment of detainees by security forces; reports of harsh and at times life-threatening prison conditions; arbitrary arrest and detention ... infringement on citizens' privacy rights ... allegations of abuses in the implementation of ... 'villagization' program; restriction of academic freedom; restrictions of freedom of assembly, association and movements'" have occurred (Oakland Institute 2013: 7-8).

The current Ethiopian government has dispossessed and leased about 2.5 million hectares of lands to Tigrayan elites and global investors such Djiboutians, Indians, Turkey, Sudanese, Pakistanis, Saudi Arabians and others (Jeffrey 2016). Although the opposition to land grabbing policies triggered the current Oromo protest movement, collective grievances such as colonial domination, the denial of self-determination, the absence of democracy,

gross human rights violations, cultural destruction, political and economic marginalization, poverty, and rampant unemployment have mobilized the entire Oromo society against the Tigrayan-led government. These grievances have accelerated the process of the Oromo struggle for control of economic and cultural resources, self-determination, statehood, and egalitarian democracy by facilitating the mobilization of the entire Oromo society to participate in the ongoing protest movement.

### **The Current Oromo Protest Movement and its Ramifications**

The accumulated grievances, the recent intensification of land grabbing policies, particularly the so-called Integrated Addis Ababa Master Plan, and the development of the political consciousness of the Oromo people starting from the national struggle of the 1960s have resulted in the current Oromia-wide peaceful protest movement. The ongoing Oromo protest movement is going for more than five months. It erupted in Ginchi, near Ambo, on November 12, 2015, and shortly covered all Oromia like wild fire. The Oromo elementary and secondary students this small town ignited the current peaceful protests because of the privatization and confiscation of a small soccer field and selling of the nearby Chilimoo forest to be cleared and deforested (Jeffrey 2016). Supporting the peaceful protests of these students, the entire Oromo from all walks of life joined the peaceful protests all over Oromia by also opposing the so-called Integrated Addis Ababa Master Plan. For the first time the revolutionary flame of *Oromummaa* (Oromo nationalism) has tied all Oromo branches together to take a coordinated action to defend their national interest. The so-called master plan was intended to expand Addis Ababa to 1.5 million hectares of surrounding Oromo lands by evicting Oromo farmers and by destroying Oromo identity, culture and history (Thomson and López 2015) and replacing them by Tigrayans and their collaborators. The Oromo interpret this policy as the replication of the policy of the Amhara-led government that uprooted and destroyed the Oromo in Finfinnee and replaced them by Amhara colonial settlers and their collaborators during the formation and development of Addis Ababa as the capital city of the Ethiopian Empire.

Through the accumulated experiences of the past twenty-five years, the Oromo people have realized that the Tigrayan colonial elites with the help their Oromo collaborators have been expropriating Oromo lands and other resources and transferring to themselves and their domestic and global supporters. In these processes, the Oromo people have become alien in their own country, and Oromia has been owned by Tigrayans. Consequently, the Oromo people were impoverished and lost hope. Educated Oromo have become jobless while most Tigrayans are dominating and controlling the political economy of Oromia and Ethiopia. The Tigrayans who were suffering from poverty and famine in the 1980s have become millionaires and billionaires. The Tigrayan colonial elites have been transferring famine to Oromia and other regions by expropriating the land and resources of Oromo and that of others to themselves and their collaborators and global supporters. At the same time, the Oromo national struggle that started in the 1960s has been penetrating the psyche of the Oromo people. This struggle has been revitalizing the Oromo national culture, history and identity. Consequently, Oromo nationalism or national *Oromummaa* has blossomed and become a revolutionary flame.

The Tigrayan state elites and their Oromo collaborators who used to think that the Oromo people were collections of “tribes” who could be used as raw materials and firewood cannot understand the essence of the current Oromo protest movement. They still believe that by beating, torturing, castrating, decapitating, raping, and murdering Oromo students, farmers, educators, and merchants can stop the Oromo struggle for statehood, sovereignty and egalitarian democracy. The Oromo activists and revolutionaries are inclusive and inviting all peoples who are suffering under Tigrayan colonialism and neoliberal globalism

that facilitates violent development. The ongoing Oromo protest movement has opened a new chapter in the history of Oromia and Ethiopia. This history is written by Oromo blood, and the relationship between the Oromo and their colonizers has been changed forever. However, the final chapter of this history is not yet written. Many things have changed as the result of the Oromo protest movement. The cost the Oromo have paid in lives and suffering is very high; within five months more than 500 Oromo including school children, pregnant women, and elderly people were massacred. Tens of thousands of Oromo have been imprisoned or collected in undisclosed concentration camps where they are beaten, tortured, exposed to diseases and famine and eventually probably decimate. Despite all these tragedies, the Oromo people have restored their national pride, patriotism, and bravery that they enjoyed between the 16<sup>th</sup> and mid-19<sup>th</sup> centuries.

During these centuries, the Oromo had their republican government under the *gadaa/siqqee* system; they had a formidable military organization. The Oromo had no mercenaries who joined the enemy to fight against them because they successfully defended themselves from their internal and external enemies during these centuries. Biyyaa Oromo that we call today Oromia was sovereign and no enemies exercised their political power on it. Young Oromo protesters are equipped with the ideology of national *Oromummaa*, which has uprooted the divisions that the enemies of the Oromo created among different Oromo branches. Some Oromo elements that have been suffering from the internalization victimization are forced to start to rethink about their Oromo national identity and the Oromo national struggle. Particularly, the Oromia Diaspora are learning about *national Oromummaa* and rallying behind the Oromo national struggle in Oromia. The Oromo Diaspora all over the world has showed solidarity with Oromo protesters by demonstrating and financially and diplomatically supporting them.

Oromo collaborators and opportunists who have been evicting Oromo farmers from their ancestral lands by joining the Tigrayan fascists are shocked and started to feel national shame. The Oromo protest movement is demonstrating that it can destroy Oromo intermediaries or mercenaries who work for the enemy at the cost of the Oromo nation. That is why the Tigrayan military rule has replaced the OPDO in Oromia. The Oromo are practically showing that they cannot accept submissive and subservient leaders that the enemy created for them. They only accepted leaders are those have struggle on behalf of them. Calling the names of Oromo heroines and heroines who have sacrificed their precious lives for them as OLF leaders and fighters, Oromo protesters show the Oromo flag and say the OLF is our leader without any fear and intimidation from the TPLF government and its OPDO collaborators. The Tigrayan-led regime has labeled Oromo peaceful protesters “terrorists” and used anti-terrorism laws to delegitimize and violent crackdown the protest movement (Thomson and López 2016).

Since Oromo protesters only have targeted on their enemy, diverse national groups in Ethiopia have somewhat changed their attitudes toward the Oromo people and their national struggle. What is amazing is that many Amhara elites who used to suspect and hate the Oromo struggle have become neutral or sympathetic to the Oromo activists and protesters. Many of them have openly denounced Tigrayan state terrorism and invited their fellow citizens to join the ongoing Oromo protest movement. Oromo protesters have practically demonstrated that they struggle to establish a democratic system that will exercise the principles of national self-determination and egalitarian multinational democracy that are in line with their democratic tradition. Overall, all Oromo who lost hope in their national struggle have restored their dreams of liberation, freedom, and democracy. Furthermore, peoples like the Sidama, Hadiya, Benishangul, Annuak, Ogaden-Somalis, and even some Amharas can ally with the Oromo people to dismantle Tigrayan colonialism and the fascist minority regime of the TPLF. These are great psychological, ideological and

diplomatic victories for the Oromo national movement. All these victories are achieved by Oromo blood and suffering. Until now about 500 Oromo have been massacred, and thousands Oromo have been imprisoned, kicked, beaten, torture, and decapitated. In fact, at this time, we do not have enough data on the killings, imprisonments, and other crimes on the Oromo.

Globally and diplomatically, the Oromo protest movement has won world attention because of its political maturity, determination, inclusiveness, and for totally disproving the ideology and political program of the Tigrayan-led minority Ethiopian government. For the first time in Oromo history, the world media outlets such as Washington Post, BBC, Newsweek, AFP, the Guardian, and other reported on the Oromo protest movement and its brutal crackdown by the Tigrayan-led Ethiopian government. This peaceful movement also for a limited degree has broken international silence on the Oromo struggle. For instance, on January 21, 2015, the European Parliament condemned the violent crackdown of Oromo protesters, and called for the establishment of a credible, transparent and independent body for investigating the murdering and imprisoning thousands protesters in Oromia.<sup>14</sup> Similarly, the UN Human Rights Experts demanded the Ethiopian authorities to stop the violent crackdown on Oromo peaceful protesters.<sup>15</sup> The US Department of State vaguely expressed its concern about the violent associated with the protest movement. But, expressing its firm support for the regime, the US signed security partnership with the Ethiopian government to exchange “logistics, services, supplies” and planned “for a future security cooperation activities designed to meet mutual defense priorities.”<sup>16</sup>

### Conclusion

The Oromo movement for control of economic and cultural resources, statehood and egalitarian democracy is gaining momentum as the current Oromo protest movement demonstrates. It has also demonstrated that the Oromo have developed their national *Oromummaa*, determination, and capacity to confront and defeat the policies of violent development and gradually decide their destiny one way or the other. Consequently, the ongoing Oromo protest movement has shaken the foundation of the Tigrayan authoritarian terrorist regime and its surrogate organization, OPDO, in Oromia and beyond. So a new Oromo-based system emerging and replacing the dying the Tigrayan colonialism and its terrorist and repressive political structures. Oromo activist networks and leadership must double its efforts to build its organizational capacity and develop specific principles of national self-determination and egalitarian multinational democracy to open a new chapter in Oromia, Ethiopia and the Horn of Africa in collaboration with progressive communities and peoples. As other social movements of the 21<sup>st</sup> century that are engaging in egalitarian democratic movements and globalization from below (Rajagopal 1999, 2003), the Oromo movement in its different forms challenges the strategy of violent development and modernity, and seeks to establish the autonomy of people in order to facilitate the formation of an egalitarian democratic state and an alternative form of development.

### Endnotes

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<sup>1</sup> Seye Abraha was a founder and former political bureau member of the Tigrayan People’s Liberation Front. He was a chauvinist Tigrayan who did not hide his negative attitudes about the Oromos and the OLF, when he was the Defense Minister of Ethiopia; See “The Prison speaks Oromiffa,” *Ethiopian Review*, January 17, 2008. Seye was jailed in Qaliti prison.

<sup>2</sup> See Hizbawi Adera, a TPLF/EPRDF Political Pamphlet, December 1996-February 1997, Vol. 4, No. 7.

<sup>3</sup> Bruna Fossati, L. Namarra, and Peter Niggli, *The New Rulers of Ethiopia and the Persecution of the Oromo: Reports from the Oromo Refugees in Djibouti*, (Dokumentation, Evangelischer Pressedienst Frankfurt am, 1996, p. 10.

<sup>4</sup> For example, the wife of Ahmed Mohamed Kuree, a seventy year-old elderly farmer, expressed on February 21, 2007, on the Voice of America, Afaan Oromo Program the following:<sup>4</sup> “We found his prayer beads, his clothes and a single bone of his which the hyenas had left behind after devouring the rest of his body, and we took those items home. What

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is more, after we got home, they [government agents] condemned us for going to Gaara Suufii and for mourning. For fear of repercussions, we have not offered the customary prayer for my husband by reading from the Qur'an. Justice has not been served. That is where we are today."

<sup>5</sup> Ahmed Mohamed Kuree was one of these Oromos. Another Oromo, Ayisha Ali, a fourteen year-old teenager, was also killed and eaten by hyenas. Her mother said on the Voice of America, Afaan Oromo Program the following: "After we heard the rumor about the old man [Ahmed Mohamed Kuree] I followed his family to Gaara Suufii [in search of my daughter]. There we found her skirt, sweater, underwear and her hair, braided . . . That was all we found of my daughter's remains." Ayisha was probably raped before she was killed.

<sup>6</sup> Mohammed Hassen "Is Genocide Against the Oromo in Ethiopia Possible," *Paper Presented at the Fourth International Biennial Conference of the Association of Genocide Scholars*, Radisson Hotel, Minneapolis, Minnesota, June 10, 2001.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid*, p. 30.

<sup>8</sup> In 2002, when the Sheko and Mezhenger peoples demanded their rights, the regime killed between 128 and 1,000 people. Nobody knows exactly how many people were killed since the government and the victims give different numbers. Similarly, on June 21, 2002, between 39 and 100 Sidamas were killed when government soldiers fired at 7,000 peaceful demonstrators in Hawas (Awash). Again government forces and colonial settlers committed genocidal massacres on the Annuak people of Gambella in December 2003 and beginning 2004; they killed 424 people and displaced about 50, 000 people. Currently, the regime is engaged in genocidal massacres, imprisonment, and massive human rights violations in Ogadenia and Oromia.

<sup>9</sup> Stanton, George. 2009. "An Open Letter to the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights," Website: [www.genocidewatch.org](http://www.genocidewatch.org), accessed on April 1, 2009.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid*, December 2002, no. 38, pp. 18-20; July 2003, no. 39, pp. 18-19.

<sup>11</sup> [http://www.humanrightsligaleague.com/press\\_Releases.html](http://www.humanrightsligaleague.com/press_Releases.html), 2008

<sup>12</sup> In this process, some Oromos have been uprooted from their communal ancestral lands, alienated, and impoverished. As William I. Robinson (2008: 23) notes, "There is . . . the rise of a new global "underclass" of supernumeraries or "redundants" who are alienated and not absorbed into the global capitalist class economy and who are structurally under- and unemployed. Hundreds of millions of supernumeraries swell the ranks of a global army of reserve labor at the same time as they hold down the wages and leverage ability among those absorbed into the global economy. The supernumeraries are subject to new forms of repressive and authoritarian social control and to an oppressive cultural and ideological dehumanization.... This culture of global capitalism glorifies policing and militarization, constructs all those who resist, or even question the logic of the dominant order as incomprehensible, even crazed, *Other*."

<sup>13</sup> [file:///Oromo Protests and Ethiopian Repression](file:///Oromo%20Protests%20and%20Ethiopian%20Repression) Overview Oromo Oromia Gadaa.com-FinfinneTribune.html, accessed on 04/11/2016

<sup>14</sup> see "European Parliament resolution on the situation in Ethiopia," <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+MOTION+P8-RC-2016-0082+0+DOC+XML+V0//EN>, accessed on 04/14/2016.

<sup>15</sup> See "UN experts urge Ethiopia to stop violent crackdown on Oromia protesters," <http://www.somalistate.com/un-experts-urge-ethiopia-to-stop-violent-crack-down-on-romia-protesters/>, accessed on 4/14/2016.

<sup>16</sup> See "US, Ethiopia sign new agreement, enhance security partnership," <http://www.hiiraan.com/news4/2016/Apr/104913/us-ethiopia-sign-new-agreement-to-enhance-defense-and-security-partnership.aspx>, accessed on /14/2016.

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