



Oromo - American Citizens Council (OACC)
Gumil Lammilwwan Oromon - America (GLOA)

1821 University Ave Suite 8 336
St. Paul MN 55104
(651) 917-0430



Joint Press Release of OACC and SMNE on Persecutions of Ethiopian Refugees in Kenya, December 29, 2010

Kenya must Stop Persecuting Ethiopian Refugees in collaboration with the Ethiopian Regime

Solidarity Movement for a New Ethiopia (SMNE) and Oromo American Citizens Council (OACC) call upon and urge the Government of Kenya to immediately stop persecuting and harassing Ethiopian refugees, particularly the Oromo, Amhara and Somali Ethiopians currently residing in the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) refugee camps in Kenya.

The ongoing persecution of Oromo and Somali refugees in Kenya is nothing more than the extension of persecution and repression they faced in their homeland, when they fled to Kenya to seek safe haven. There is clear evidence now that the Kenyan government is engaged in this egregious refugee rights violation at the behest of the Ethiopian government. It is truly shocking and dismaying to see the Kenyan government serve as the agent of the Tigre Peoples Liberation Front (TPLF) regime of Ethiopia that is notorious for its human rights violations.

The Kenyan government, in flagrant violation of its commitment and obligation under the international refugee and human rights laws, particularly violating the *non-refoulement* principle is rounding up and handing over thousands of refugees to the brutal TPLF regime of Ethiopia. Some of these refugees were executed when returned to Ethiopia, while others were tortured and maimed by the Meles Zenawi's regime.

The cases of two Oromo Engineers, Mesfin Abebe Abdisa and Tasfahun Camadaa Gurmessaa, are important to note here. They were both UNHCR recognized refugees in Kenya. They were abducted and handed over to the TPLF regime by the Kenyan security forces. After two years of torture, physical mutilation (including castration) and incommunicado detention in one of many TPLF secret torture chambers, the TPLF regime sentenced Abdisa to death and Gurmessaa to life imprisonment. The same fate is waiting thousands of Ethiopian refugees who are currently rounded up from various villages, towns and cities of Kenya and forcibly handed over to the Ethiopian regime.

What is even more shocking is the fact that the Kenyan government is allowing the security forces of the TPLF regime to enter Kenya including the UNHCR refugee camps to kill, abduct and torture defenseless Ethiopian refugees particularly those from Oromo, Amhara and Somali ethnic groups.

SMNE and OACC strongly condemn this behavior of the Kenyan government which flagrantly violates all norms and principles of international laws including the United Nations Refugee Convention and its Additional Protocols to which Kenya is a party.

SMNE and OACC would like to underline the importance of the historical and longstanding friendship between the peoples of our two countries particularly the blood and cultural relations that exists between Oromo and Somali Ethiopians and the Kenyan people. We urge the Kenyan government not to break this bond that is cemented by blood and history; lest lasting enmity for generations to come between our people and our two countries is created.

We also appeal to the wisdom of the Kenyan people, civil society and political leaders to reign on their government to stop this brutality which is certain to leave lasting scar between our two countries and peoples. The TPLF regime is transitory, has no long lasting life in Ethiopia. However, the relationship between our two people will be there forever. It is not wise for the Kenyan government to ally with the current government that will be nonexistent tomorrow and persecute our people, thereby creating enmity with people who will be there forever.

The Kenya government has an obligation under the United Nations Charter, the United Nations Refugee Convention and its Additional Protocols to protect Ethiopians who fled to Kenya fleeing serious human rights violations in Ethiopia. The Oromo, Amhara and Ethiopian Somali refugees currently housed at the UNHCR refugee camps are UNHCR recognized victims of political persecution. They are *bona fide* refugees who should not be handed to their potential persecutors. The Kenyan government is fully cognizant of the political repression the TPLF regime is committing against the Ethiopian people, and therefore, its forced repatriation of refugees makes it accessory of the crime that the TPLF regime is committing against our people.

SMNE and OACC call upon the United Nations, the Governments of United States, United Kingdom, Germany, France, Canada; and the European Union, the UN Human Rights Council and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees to strongly urge the Kenyan government to immediately stop the persecution of Ethiopian refugees, stop giving access to the Ethiopian regime's military and security forces to UNHCR refugee camps in Kenya, stop forced repatriation of Ethiopian refugees to Ethiopia where they face certain execution, torture and long years of imprisonment.

Please do not hesitate to e-mail your comments to: Mr. Robsan Itana, Executive Director of the Oromo American Citizens Council. E-mail: gtismn@gmail.com

Or

Mr. Obang Metho, Executive Director of the SMNE, at: Obang@solidaritymovement.org

The letter format of this press release has been sent to the President of Kenya, the Secretary Generals of the United Nations and African Union; the President of the United Nations Human Rights Council, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, United States Secretary of State, European Union Foreign Policy Chief, Foreign Secretary of United Kingdom, Foreign Ministers of France, Germany and Canada.