



INTERNATIONAL OROMO LAWYERS ASSOCIATION (IOLA)

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IOLA Press Release regarding Human rights and UNHRC effort in Ethiopia

The International Oromo Lawyers Association – IOLA, would like to commend the Ethiopian government for its initiative to invite the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights – UN HCHCR, Mr. Zeid Ra’ad Al Hussein to Ethiopia for an official visit. In the past, the Ethiopian government categorically refused to allow the High Commissioner and other United Nations Special Rapporteurs and experts to visit and inquire about the human rights abuses perpetrated against citizens.

The decision by the Ethiopian government to invite the High Commissioner and to facilitate a meeting between the Prime minister, the Foreign minister, the Abba Gadaas and former political prisoners, came at a time when the newly elected Prime minister is just in his first month in Office, hence, it shows that there is a good will from the Ethiopian government not only to engage the United Nations Human Rights agency to monitor the human rights situation in the country from a distance but to also open a Regional Office in Finfinne (Addis Ababa).

We are fully aware that the socio-economic and political problem in the country in general and that of human rights in particular that has increasingly become of concern to the international community, is a reality that the newly elected Prime Minister may not solve in a span of few months or years. The culture of human rights abuses is deeply integrated into the social fabric of the nation therefore, it is very naïve to assume that things will drastically change with the opening of an office of the High Commissioner in Addis but it is a promising beginning.

For the situation of human rights of Ethiopians to improve, IOLA recommends that the Ethiopian government should take a bold measure of widely implanting the culture of human rights respect in the society through establishing human rights institutions and building their capacity with the help of experts from the Office of the UN High Commissioner. In IOLA’s view, the existing national Human Rights institutions which were custom-tailored to fit into the wishes of TPLF led-regime should be dismantled and replaced by a new independent institution which should have its branches in ALL regions and accountable only to the Parliament and loyal to the Constitution.

There must be an end to the violation of human rights of citizens. The government, as the only duty-bound institution to ensure that citizen’s human rights are respected to their fullest, is finally showing intentions to assume that responsibility. That initiative must be encouraged.

IOLA, while appreciating the government’s bold initiative to allow the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights to open its office in Ethiopia, would like to express its readiness to lend it’s expertise as and when necessary to contribute to the efforts of the government aiming at ensuring full respect of citizens human rights.

International Oromo Lawyers Association – IOLA.

May 2, 2018