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Group
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OSGA- individual UPR submission-Ethiopia- November/December 2009”

Statement on the inHuman Treatment of Oromos in Ethiopia, Information for Universal Periodic Review of Ethiopia’s Human Rights Violations status, December 2009.

1. The Oromia Support Group of Australian Unit (OSGA) is a Human rights advocating Organisation working in line with its mother Organisation, Oromia Support Group (OSG). OSG collects information from within Ethiopia and from countries in the Ethiopian Diaspora, especially Kenya, Djibouti and Sudan about the human rights situation in Ethiopia and publishes this information in press releases and other publications. Our Complaint statement for the process of the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) of Ethiopia, the process that involves a review of the Ethiopian government human rights records, is a little from outrageous human rights violations of the Ethiopian government. It mainly focuses on inhuman treatment of the Oromo people.
2. Inhuman treatment like torture took place in police stations and unofficial detention centres where prisoners “disappeared”. Over 26,000 peasant Associations and over 5,000 Urban Dwellers Associations (Kebeles) created during the Dergue regime established one prison each. This does not include the “Bermudas”, as the hidden prisons were then called. The present regime has inherited all these prison facilities. In addition the current Ethiopian government used former Military Training Centres, offices, peasant and Urban Dwellers Association halls, and even private houses as detention centres. It is difficult to document the wide range of in human treatment on such a large number of prisons but several hundred first-hand accounts and interviews of significant numbers of Oromos who have experienced detention, beating, torture and rape have close similarity. Frequently there are associated episodes of abuses committed against family members, for no apparent reason, other than being related to a suspected supporter of Oromo Liberation Front (OLF) movements in Oromia. Sons, daughters and other close relatives of suspected opposition supporters are often detained, harassed and tortured. Some have been disappeared or killed.
3. The Department of State Country Reports on Human Rights Practices in Ethiopia report every year that the most common reason for arbitrary detention is suspicion of belonging to the Oromo and Ogaden opposition movements.
4. Torture methods employed against prisoners by government military or security officers since 1991 includes but not limited to have been as follows:- 1) Tying the prisoner with plastic strings around the upper arms pinned together behind the back, and leaving the victim tied up for several hours or even a few days, causing intense pain, swelling and paralysis of the hands, which may be permanent; 2) Tying prisoners in other ways, or hanging them up by ropes, then beating them, and beatings on the soles of the feet 3) Beatings with stick and guns butts and whipping with electric cable, while the victims are forced into a kneeling or prostrate position; 4) Terrifying detainees, death threats, with guns held at the head; 5) Electric shock 6) Kicking and beating with guns, metal bars, sticks, and

stones, whilst victim's limbs are tied or manacled with chains and handcuffs 7) Carrying a heavy rock 70-80Kg on back whilst going up and down stairs for several hours. 8) Hanging 2-3 Kg of weights on men's testicles for hours. 9) Castration 10) Being made to lie naked and still all-night, under threat of shooting by guard if seen to move. 11) Removal of finger and toe nails 12) Confined to a "small dark room" in the same for months. 15) The rape of women, 16) Women's genital organs impaled with stakes and glass, electric shocks to the same (Reference---) The newly introduced torture system:- 17) Upon their first appearance in court on January 9, 2009, Mr. Dachasa Marga and Mr. Sileshi Dagafa complained before the judges that they themselves and other Oromos detained with them have, at different times, been forced to spend about fifteen hours in standing position. Mr. Bekele Jirata and his (fifteen) co-defendants also complained in court about the newly introduced "Silent Torture" (to be placed in standing position for about fifteen hours), which is said to have been adopted by the EPRDF for it does not leave behind any physically noticeable symptoms. (HRLHA Press release No-15)

5. Mr. Seye Abraha the founder, former political bureau member of the Tigrean People's Liberation Front (TPLF) and a former Defense Minister of the regime now ruling Ethiopia, who got out of 'Qaliti' prison (One of known huge detention and torture centre in Ethiopia) after six years spoke out to Ethiopian in Diaspora on January 5, 2008 at Virginia, (USA) by saying "The Prison Speaks Oromiffa" (Oromo language). Mr. Seye added saying "about 99% of the prisoners in 'Qaliti' are Oromos".
6. No need of doubt that many of these prisoners are victims of suspicion of anything related to the OLF. According to our information from inside, many prisoners are family members held hostage to hand in their adult relatives suspected of joining the OLF. Many are students who take the constitution and their rights seriously and demanded respect of their and their people's human rights. They are of all age groups including 90 year olds, children being nursed by their prisoner mothers, students, and businessmen, peasant farmers who work hard to feed their families. Many have never seen judges or are languishing in jails for years.
7. The comprehensive picture of naked tyranny against the Oromo people being committed with impunity and complete disregard for human life could not be summed up with few words and pages since each of these has a diverse story. Our complaint statement here dwells on some samples of inhuman treatment (Torture) that ultimately led to death, mental disorder, amputation and lameness.
8. Some instances where inhuman treatment ultimately led to death are:- a) Victims of Karchele Prison:- Gaddisa Hirphaasa, student at Addis Ababa University died in Karchele Prison following torture and denial of medical attention. The burial ceremony of student Gaddisa Hirphaasa, who was severely beaten by security police at 'Kalitti' prison, south of Addis Ababa and died on 28.03.06. It was said that the police also beat the people who were taking the body of the dead student of Addis Ababa University Gaddisa, near Gudar town 135 kilometer west of Addis Ababa. The Ethiopian government, which calls itself 'democratic', should have abided by the International Human Right Convention Law and respect the innocent civilians right kept in prisons. Others died of it in the same prison where Gaddisa was, for example, Mokonnen Zawude, Nigusu Gojera, Alemayehu Ittafa, Zelalem Bayisa, Umar Haji and Haji Mohammed Messa died from the torture
9. b) Victims of Mount (Gaara) Suufii:- VOA Afaan Oromo program on Wednesday Feb. 21, 2007 brought to the surface the atrocities conducted against Oromo nationals detained in "China Camp" at Mount (Gaara) Suufii, which is located about two hours walk on foot from Mi'essoo to Asaboot in

Eastern Oromia. One of the victims was Ayishaa Alii(see above picture). Ayishaa was fourteen years old, barely a teenager. According to her mother, Ms. Shamsii Ahmed Muusaa of Mi'essoo, a divorced mother of six, Ayishaa attended school in Asaboot up to grade four. She was forced to discontinue her schooling to help her mother and raise her younger brothers. Mrs. Shamsii described the events leading up to her daughter's murder to VOA as follows. "His name is Muhammad Boruu. He was armed. He arrived at 9:00 AM. He woke her up from where she was sleeping and ordered her to get on the motorbike he came on. She [my daughter] had a wound on her behind which she told him about. He said to her "forget your wound. You are to be devoured by wild predator beasts" and ordered her to follow him. She followed him with only her skirt on her back. That was how he took my daughter away from me. Because he worked for the government, we assumed he was taking her to a prison. I had always assumed she was detained and searched for her in detention camps for two weeks. After we heard the rumour about the old man [Obbo Ahmed Mohammed Kuree] I followed his family to Mount (Gaara) Suufii [in search of my daughter]. There we found her skirt, sweater, under wear and her hair, braided and red [dyed in henna] as it was when she was taken away. That was all we found of my daughters remains." [Audio clips in Afaan Oromoo] English. Speaking about others murdered with her daughter, Ms Shamsii says: They [the government] continue to take individuals to this mountain and murder them. Besides my daughter's, we have found many human remains. One example would be a henna dyed human hand. There are many people missing and whose loved ones are hoping that they are in detention. They continue to murder people.

10. An elderly man who was a political prisoner at "China camp" for two and a half months, but did not want to be identified for fear of retaliation by the TPLF regime, describes the deplorable human rights abuses in that area as follows. "There is always torture in that place. People are beaten up there day and night. That place is very worrisome. We were imprisoned there by Abdallaa Idris and his colleagues. Abdallaa Idris is the leader of the [government] Militia deployed to Western Hararge. Abraham Kamiilaa is second in command. Aadam Dheeraa is the third person. Alamayyoo is the lead interrogator. These people arrest and torture individuals day and night. They take them away at night around midnight, 2 AM, 3 AM or 4 AM. Among those taken away, were Ashaa Kormee and Ahmed Kuree. They took them away at 4:00 AM in the morning. They never came back. We have heard that they have been killed. Their prayer beads, pictures and ID cards have been found, particularly that of Ahmed Kuree. Of the girls [killed], it is said that their skirts have been found. For these reasons, the situation in that area is grim. Others are being persecuted under the pretext of their siblings joining armed groups [to fight against the government]. For instance, from Asaboot area, siblings of Abraham Walii, Ahmad Mahammad Walii and Haadha Ahmad are being persecuted under such pretext." [Audio clips in Afaan Oromoo] English
11. Many have become mentally deranged due to police torture. Tolera Tadesse, Umar Shek Kedir and Temam Amede are losing their consciousness due to this torture in which prison officials also deny them medical attention.
12. Some examples where the case of Inhuman treatment ultimately led to incurable bodily injury are :On October 24, 1998 E.C a police officer of the prison opened an automatic fire on a cell in which Amin Kelil, Idris Awel, Lamessa Tasissa, Zekarias Tariku, and Ashenafi Biru were heavily wounded while in their cell and sustained incurable bodily injury.
13. Case of Inhuman treatment, which ultimately led to be lame:- Mr. Girma Ittafa became lame and unable to walk due to the torture from Ethiopian security force. Mr. Girma Ittafa was born in 1981 in Harogy Agamsa Peasant Association, Lalo Asabi district of Western Oromia region. Girma attended his primary and junior secondary school at Harogy Agamsa School. He attended most part of his high school at Ghimbi Comprehensive high school and finally completed at Dongoro Adventist private

school. After his High school completion he went back to his birthplace and *began* to teach Afaan Oromo at Harogy Agamsa School without any payment for one year on his own initiative. In the year 2002 he got a chance to join Federal Police College and graduated in April 2003 as a police officer. After his graduation from the police college, Mr. Girma was assigned to work for the Ethiopian federal government on issues related to court case and was frequently travelling to different parts of the country. On 23rd of January 2004, the federal police dismissed him from his job and hold him under house arrest. Exactly a month later, on 23rd of February 2004, a Federal police inspector, Mr. Girmay, police commanders of security heads of federal affairs Mr. Destalem and Mr. Tilahun arrested him while he was at his home and at the same time more than 50 armed security forces invaded his house at district 17 Kebele 19. After putting him under arrest, they began to beat and kick him till unconsciousness, tied his legs and hands together with metallic wires and took him to a special police camp known by the name “ Against anti peace “.In this camp they began to torture him by laying him down on a rough metals covering water well. They tried to extract information. He had nothing to expose. When they failed to get any clue from him they assigned another Oromo police, Sergeant Chala, to take him to a water well, kill and throw his corpse into that well in the late night. Sergeant Chala took him out and came to know that Mr. Girma is an Oromo whom he know very well and could not dare to take an action against him. Rather he told him that he is going to lock to him in a toilet room from outside, leave him there, inform the Red Cross and his friends on what condition he is and flee the country. Actually he did that and left Ethiopia. He knows very well that if he himself fails in the hands of the Ethiopian security forces it might cost him life. The next morning when the security agents arrive. Girma was discovered in a toilet room alive and locked to him from outside. This condition created a big distrust among the policemen and the security forces.

14. As the detention of Mr. Girma became public the security agents preferred to make him suffer severely than killing him. They held him in this camp consecutively for three days under severe torture and inflicted heavy damage both mentally and physically to him. Then after, they transferred him to the notorious central investigation centre, Maikelawi. This time he was unable to make any physical move due to the heavy torture committed against him. In Maikelawi, they firmly tied his arms and feet firmly together to the back to the extent of ceasing of blood circulation and kept him a long time in cold water. They took him out of the cold water and began to beat him with electric wires and gave him electric shocks. Then they forced him to put his own signature on a false confession they themselves organised. He resisted signing it. When they failed to force him to sign then they hanged him upside down in between two tables and connected an electric shock to him. He began to bleed through his nose, ear and mouth. Some of those security agents who committed this action against him are: -Moni Tadesse, Tadesse Meseret, Tezerra, Ratta, Alemayehu and others.
15. It was after this repeated torture that he got the opportunity to apply to a court. And then he got a chance to attend the First Higher Federal Court, Arada Branch and explained to them what the security people did to him without having any ground simply on suspicion. He also applied to be admitted to the Hospital for treatment of his sustained injury. In the Black Lion Hospital the physician informed him that he has no any chance more to walk freely because of sustained injury on his spinal cord. Mr. Girma was finally freed because of big pressure from the Red Cross the court released him on bail and he was attending the “endless pending court appearances until 2007 with Wheelchair and finally left Ethiopia for exile in 2008.
16. Ethiopia is a major country of origin for trafficking in persons. To a lesser extent, it is also a country of transit. The United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) has listed Ethiopia as one of the top10

countries of origin for children trafficked from Africa.¹ (Andrew Unsworth, “West African Gang Arrested in U.K. for Child Trafficking,” *Sunday Times* (South Africa), 3 August 2003.)

17. Ethiopian women and children are trafficked transnationally for domestic servitude primarily to Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, and the U.A.E., but also to Bahrain, Djibouti, Kuwait, Sudan, Syria, and Yemen. Some of these women are trafficked into the sex trade after arriving at their destinations, while others have been trafficked onward from Lebanon to Turkey, Italy, and Greece. Small numbers of men are trafficked to Saudi Arabia and the Gulf States for low-skilled forced labour. (*U.S. State Dept Trafficking in Persons Report, June, 2008*)
18. The victims are often physically and psychologically abused. Child prostitution is a major concern in Addis Ababa. An early 2003 survey on prostituted women and children indicated that the problem is growing at an alarming rate. The survey identified 258 street-based women and children in prostitution in the capital city, 60 percent of whom were between the ages of 15 and 24.² Child prostitution is on the rise in neighboring Djibouti, and a recent study found that 73.3 percent of street children there originated from Ethiopia; over a quarter of these children were exploited in the commercial sex industry. Most are girls from the towns and cities or Oromia region of Ethiopia. Rural Ethiopian children and adults are trafficked to urban areas for domestic servitude and, less frequently, for commercial sexual exploitation and forced labor, such as in street vending, begging, traditional weaving, or agriculture; situations of debt bondage have been reported.
19. The constitution of Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (FDRE) Article 14 to Article 18 grants the Rights to life, the Security of Person, Liberty and Prohibition against Inhuman Treatment. Article 15 of the FDRE Constitution guarantees the right to life in Ethiopia; it is also protected by Article 6 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), which Ethiopia ratified on September 11, 1993. Ethiopia is also a signatory of Universal Declaration in which the Article 2 and 3 protects the right of life, liberty and security. Article 18 of the FDRE Constitution and Article 7 of the ICCPR prohibit the use of torture, while Articles 17 of the FDRE Constitution and 9 of the ICCPR condemn arbitrary arrest and detention. Article 24 of FDRE constitution grants that everyone has the right to respect for his human dignity, reputation and honour. Article 20(1) of the FDRE constitution and Article 9(3) and (4) of ICCPR provides that accused have the right to speedy trial by an independent judiciary, this constitutional right is utterly violated.
20. OSGA appeals to UPR working groups to charge the Ethiopian government for its infamous mass killings, disappearances, arbitrary arrests, torture and other cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment. Perpetrators of extra judicial executions and other atrocities should be brought before an international tribunal.

¹ Andrew Unsworth, “West African Gang Arrested in U.K. for Child Trafficking,” *Sunday Times* (South Africa), 3 August 2003.

² “Ethiopian Anti-Vice Police Arrest Five Nightclub Owners after Raids,” *Deutsche Presse-Agentur*, 16 July 2003.