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## The OLF urges the international community to channel emergency assistance to Ethiopia through aid agencies

The Ethiopian regime dominated by the Tigrayan People's Liberation Front (TPLF) continues using every opportunity to dehumanize and control the Oromo people. It uses famine and epidemics deliberately to attack the livelihood of the people and weaken their support to Oromo Liberation Front (OLF).

Famine aid is diverted from regions in acute need and sent to Tigray through the Endowment Fund for the Rehabilitation of Tigray (EFFORT) which is run by TPLF and headed by Mrs. Azeb Mesfin, the wife of Prime Minister Meles Zenawi. Misappropriation of famine aid is not new to the TPLF but a method used during the great famine of the 1980s that affected the northern part of the country.

As in the past, the current famine in Ethiopia is not only a result of natural calamity but also manmade disaster largely by the regime itself. The regime's development policy is not only discriminatory but also pursues the communist style villagization programme conducted by the former military junta led by Mengistu Hailemariam. As instrument of political control, the villagization programme is exclusively implemented in Oromia and other regions in the south.

Furthermore, the current famine in Ethiopia is complicated by the extensive farmland sale by the Ethiopian regime. Out of the 3.6 million hectares of farmland sold by the regime by far the largest is Oromo land. As the direct consequence of the forceful displacement of the Oromo farmers, famine has also developed in the west and central part of Ethiopia where people are dying from starvation hidden from the world's media, in addition to the already drought affected eastern and southern parts of Oromia.

Although the Ethiopian regime falsely claims that the farmland sale is to increase productivity none of the food produced on the lands sold to foreign investors is for local use. While the indigenous people are suffering from chronic food shortage and starvation, investors are harvesting tones of cereals for export to lucrative markets abroad. The long term negative impact of unregulated intensive deforestation to clear lands for the large scale commercial farming will be rapid expansion of desertification and catastrophic water and food shortage for the entire Horn of Africa region.

Mr. Meles Zenawi's regime has, on several occasions, hindered delivery of food aid to needy areas of Oromia for political reasons and continues the same tactics during the current ongoing famine in the Horn of Africa.

Therefore, the OLF appeals to the international humanitarian organizations to channel their relief assistance for the victims of famine in Ethiopia through non-governmental and international aid agencies instead of the Ethiopian regime, which uses aid money and donated food as a weapon of suppression against the Oromo people and others in Ethiopia.

The OLF also extends its appeals to international agencies that all famine affected areas in Oromia deliberately unreported and hidden by the TPLF regime should be visited by an independent body.

Oromia shall be free!

**Oromo Liberation Front**